

The Program

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The Program

by [ComfortableSilences](#)

Summary

Alphas and Omegas depend on each other for relief from their designation. The longer that they deny their bodies' needs the worse the symptoms become. An Omega's heats will only get worse and more frequent, while an Alpha loses his control completely and is launched into a rut which affects not only his body but his mind.

The Ministry launches a program to help deal with the Alpha/Omega problem in the Wizarding World. They offer the chance for relief without admitting to your designation. A matching system where an Omega can use an Alpha to see her through her heat and an Alpha can use an Omega to keep his sanity. The best part is it is completely anonymous, the matches are decided based on mutual attraction to each other's pheromones, and a potion prohibits the brain from recognising your partner.

Hermione Granger has never been with an Alpha, her heats are becoming unbearable. Draco Malfoy begins to lose control of his body in his fight against his own designation. Ultimately they surrender to the program, knowing they have to face the inevitable lest they lose their own or take someone else's right to consent.

Notes

See the end of the work for [notes](#)

- Translation into Português brasileiro available: [The Program](#) | [Tradução](#) by [moonletterss](#)

Chapter 1: Peppermint and Cedarwood

‘I’m just saying,’ Ginny held her hands up in surrender, ‘I think you should consider it,’ she said, as she cleared the table with a flick of her wand.

Hermione’s mouth flew open in shock, ‘Consider it?!’ it felt like her eyebrows were pressing into her hairline. She plonked the kitchen roll in her hand on the now cleared table, as she listened to the clattering of the plates as they slotted themselves into the dishwasher. She looked at Harry, ‘Consider it?!’ causing the dark-haired wizard to flinch, nearly dropping the glass he was drying with a towel in his hands, ‘Harry, you can’t possibly think this is a good idea? Seriously?’ she shrieked.

She watched Harry’s Adam’s apple bob in his throat. He set the glass on the kitchen countertop, throwing the towel over his shoulder, ‘Maybe it wouldn’t be such a bad idea...’

She threw her hands up in frustration, slapping them back down against her thighs, ‘Oh great. So even you think I’m just some *broodmare* who should be locked away just for the use of alphas!’

‘It’s not like that, Mione,’ he moved towards her, setting his hands against the back of the dining chair in front of her, leaning on it for support, ‘It’s as much for them as it is for you.’

Hermione went to tell him how ridiculous he was for believing that when he interrupted, ‘Your heats have been getting worse,’ he said, voice soft with sympathy, ‘we’ve all noticed.’

Hermione leaned both of her hands on the table and stared at her knuckles, holding the table so tight her knuckles were turning white. The worst part was that Harry was right. She had spent the last week drowning in her bed, begging for something that she had never even experienced before.

She only even *knew* one alpha. People were secretive of this sort of thing. The only people who knew she was an omega were Ron, Harry and Ginny. The only alpha she ever actually knew was Charlie Weasley, and he had helped talk Ron out of being with her. He’d been with an omega before and apparently it was inevitable that an alpha would seek her out and usurp him. Ron was adamant his brother was wrong until Hermione’s heats hit maturity. Apparently it made him feel like he wasn’t enough, and that he’d never be enough. She would be angry with him if she hadn’t been there, crying and mewling for relief he just couldn’t provide. It was for the best ultimately, but she still wondered what could have been.

‘Hermione, please say you’ll go...for your next heat,’ the sincerity in Ginny’s voice startled her out of her thoughts. Hermione looked up to see she had moved beside Harry, gently holding onto his forearm. Their faces mirrored each other, worry and distress written in the lines of their faces.

She thought back to how it felt, lonely and burning in the dark, pleading for someone who didn’t exist to help her. Sometimes, when it got really bad she’d dose herself in calming

draughts and every kind of sleeping potion she could brew. She knew the lengths she'd go to just for a minute of peace in those moments were getting dangerous.

'Fine, I'll make an appointment,' she said quietly staring down at her feet.

The sweat gathered into a neat bead in his hairline. The bead began to swell and swell until it could no longer take the weight of itself. It slid down his forehead and trickled right to the end of his nose, stretching and pulling to hold on, but inevitably it fell landing with a silent pop onto the ink on his parchment.

'For fuck's sake!' Draco leapt from his seat throwing his smudged parchment off his desk. He stood panting in his study, hands gripping his desk so hard the ancient wood started to give under the pressure.

'Merlin's beard, you need to get laid.'

Draco closed his eyes tight, forcing a gush of air through his nostrils, like a bull ready to charge. He slowly and deliberately opened his eyes and turned his head towards his friend.

'You should sign up for that alpha thing. The ministry's running it,' Blaise lifted his foot and deposited it on his right knee, setting the parchment he had been studying onto his lap. 'At the very least you might get a good shag out of it,' He looked up at him over tiny round glasses that should have made him look ridiculous, but somehow just made him look cooler.

'I'm not going to be some...some..' he rolled his hand vigorously in circles looking for the right word, '... *bastard* who takes advantage of an omega in heat, Blaise!'

'Ooooooh,' his friend sang, rolling his eyes at him, which only served to raise his hackles even more. 'It's all consensual, Draco,' Blaise looked at him with half-lidded eyes, 'they sign off before they even go in heat.' Blaise looked back to the parchment in his lap, 'If you want to stress yourself out into a *rut* other there by yourself. Be my guest. But I think I'd like you a lot better if you just gave in to your *needs*,' Blaise's lip curled up at the sides into a mischievous smirk.

He frowned, knowing that his friend had chosen the word 'needs' very carefully. Draco was an alpha, and alphas needed omegas. He'd been told time and again this would happen. Eventually, he would start to become a slave to his own designation. His body would start to rut for him unless he mated. The pulsing in his forehead told him he was nearing the point of no return. If he didn't do something the beast inside him would take over control, and who knows what it would do. At least if he signed up to this scheme the omega would be willing, using him for the same thing he would be using her for. The only thing that settled it in his mind was that whoever she was, she would sign when she was in her right state of mind, a witch rather than an omega.

Draco huffed a breath and shuffled through more parchment on his desk. He dipped his quill into his inkpot, 'Fine. I'll book an appointment,' he returned to writing, and he tried to ignore

the little scoff coming from where Blaise was sat.

‘Now Miss Granger, I just wanted to confirm before we start that everything that happens here is strictly confidential,’ the little Mediwitch said, straightening the parchment in her hand. She was almost the same height standing as Hermione was sitting down, that meant she was likely an omega herself, which she had to admit settled her nerves considerably.

She smiled, pushing her chubby cheeks up her face, as she handed her a clipboard with the parchment, ‘These are your consent forms, you’ve already read the rules and regulations, but I’ll highlight the important parts.’ Hermione stared at the paperwork in front of her, lightly running her eyes over it to make sure they hadn’t changed any of the wording from the one she received in her welcome pack.

‘It is forbidden for either of you to hurt or claim the other,’ the little witch read from the paper in front of her, ‘You will both be given a potion to confuse your senses about your partner, what you see and hear will not be connected to the part of your brain that stores details about the people we know and meet. This means that you will not recognise them, nor will they recognise you, Miss Granger,’ the tiny witch sped through the disclaimer like she did it a thousand times a day. She probably did.

‘You are free to receive the identity of your partner afterwards, but only with full consent of both alpha and omega,’ she set the paper down on the medical bed beside her, ‘Now, Miss Granger, if I could have your signed consent form...’ she held her gloved hand out and Hermione scrawled her signature before handing over her forms.

‘Lovely,’ the Mediwitch beamed kindly, ‘now we get to the fun part!’ she wrinkled her nose, ‘we get to choose a man!’ Hermione couldn’t help but laugh. The witch was middle-aged and too cute to talk about men with.

She crossed to her cupboard and pulled out a long test tube holder holding several tubes, each one filled with a clear liquid, ‘now,’ the little witch set the tray of test tubes in front of her. Hermione stared at the colourless liquid, feeling the weight of her anxiety in her chest for the first time.

‘Based on the answer to your questions at the previous appointment we have selected seven samples for you to try. These are pheromones collected from the alphas. They will also be shown your sample from last week and the most compatible alpha will...appreciate your scent in the same way you’ll appreciate his.’ The little witch lifted a test tube from the rack and placed it in her hand.

Hermione lifted the bottle and sat up straighter, hoping it would calm the butterflies in her stomach. She had smelled alphas before, the odd scent attracting her attention in a crowd, but she had never gotten this close to the source of the alluring scents spreading through the air. She pressed her thumb to the cork containing the pheromones. She took one last look at the Mediwitch who smiled encouragingly, slightly nodding her head.

Hermione pushed the cork from the bottle with her thumb and apprehensively brought her nose to the sample. The smell travelled up her nose burning through her nose hairs as it went. It smelled like bleach to her, nearly burning her eyes. She immediately pulled the sample away from her face, choking on the fumes.

The Mediwitch giggled, her rosy cheeks getting even rosier, 'You've got the control one straight away then, Miss Granger. We always give a sample from an incompatible male to make sure we got our predictions right. It seems we were spot on with you. You should find another of these more to your liking.'

Hermione frowned, putting the cork back into the disgusting tube, and lifted the next. She swallowed, expecting it to be as horrible as the last as if this was all some sort of practical joke on her.

She decided to be brave, and popped the cork on this one quickly, shoving her nose under it preparing herself for something unpleasant. She unwrinkled her nose as she realised it wasn't totally unpleasant. It smelled like fresh mornings, the kind where there's just a little frost on the tips of the grass' blades. While it wasn't unpleasant, it didn't exactly draw her in either, she didn't experience any of the symptoms she had expected. Something about this particular alpha felt too...comfortable. The best way she could describe it was like a relative.

She set it down and opened the third bottle, it smelled like burning wood. Like a warm comforting fire, and she could nearly swear there was the smell of marshmallows melting in there too, though that didn't make any sense. It was really nice actually, there was something warm and comforting in the smells of this one. There was something in it that piqued her interest, but nothing dramatic. She smiled warmly but set it down in the line of tubes regardless, perhaps he would be an option if the other alphas' didn't give her much of a reaction either. At least she assumed she could be comfortable with him.

She lifted the fourth bottle and popped the cork, lazily bringing it to her nose. She was starting to lose hope, there were only a few vials left. Would she be the one omega they couldn't match?

She breathed in the scent and instantly felt lightheaded. It was a cold kind of spice, like peppermint and cedarwood. It hit her like a splash of freezing water in her face, and it ran down her body increasing in heat as it made its way down her stomach like a caress. By the time it reached between her legs, it was boiling. She could feel it bubbling against her lips. Or was that her pulse? The last thing she remembered was desperately sucking the air into her lungs to get more of the delicious scent, and a vague dreamy notion of a beat. No, a chant getting farther and farther away.

'Alpha...alpha.'

Chapter 2: Strawberries and Roses

Chapter Notes

Just thought it was worthwhile noting again- some of the symptoms that Omegas typically have I have also projected onto the Alphas in my universe. With that said...ENJOY!

See the end of the chapter for [more notes](#)

‘We really appreciate you coming in, Mr Malfoy,’ for such a tiny witch she was nearly impossible to keep up with, ‘It’s not often we get a case like this.’ She shuffled at an almost inhuman pace through the hall. He was thankful for his alpha height, his long strides managing to keep him at her heels.

‘It’s no problem,’ he awkwardly shoved his hands into his pockets. He hadn’t expected this. He hadn’t even heard of something like this before.

‘Now just remember, you can always say no,’ she pushed her small stout body against a door, shoving herself through it like it didn’t exist.

The urgency was starting to give him the first flutter of nerves for the first time since he’d been sent an urgent owl that morning. As he turned to enter the door himself, the Mediwitch had already laid out a few tubes filled with pheromones on the table. He hadn’t even had a chance to take his coat off. He hadn’t expected everything to move so fast. Neither did the witch he had been assigned to he supposed, the poor girl fell right into a heat the minute she smelled him. He couldn’t deny the very thought of that made the space between his breaths shorter, as if the alpha in him was trying to scent out it’s female. It sickened him.

‘Now before we start do you have any questions?’

He swallowed, forcing himself to ask the question that had been rolling around his mind all morning, ‘Why did this happen to her? Surely just the scent of an alpha isn’t usually enough...’ he asked as he took off his coat and sat in the chair opposite her.

‘I’m afraid there’s a lot I’m not allowed to disclose with you, Mr Malfoy,’ she said. He tried to hide the disappointment and anxiety in his eyes. He must have failed, because her already wrinkled eyes crinkled further, filled with the warmth of sympathy. She took a deep breath, ‘but it is an awfully difficult choice that has been thrust upon you. It just shows that it’s highly likely you have an intense compatibility,’ he stared down at the tubes in front of him, wondering if the same fate beheld him as soon as he opened pandora’s test tube. He zoned out from what the woman was saying but something in his subconscious pricked at his awareness when he heard, ‘She’s also never really embraced being an Omega.’

His eyes flew back up to meet the little witch's. He knew what that meant, she had never been with an alpha before. His eyes instantly started to fill with panic, worried that the girl was just that, a girl.

The Mediwitch seemed to sense the pieces connecting in his head, and something turned frantic in her as she started flapping her chubby arms at him, 'No no dear! She's around the same age as you,' her eyes shot open wide and she instantly flung her hands across her mouth, 'I didn't tell you that!' she muffled into her hands.

He smiled down at the floor, relieved that the omega awaiting him was at least a woman, 'Told me what?' he said, looking back up at the Mediwitch and winking at her.

She brought her hands away from her mouth to reveal a bright warm smile in thanks, only slightly reprimanding for his cheek. She spun away from him and brought him the tubes laid out in the rack to his side of the table. It was clearly designed for a lot more, there were currently only three in the rack in front of him. It was a clear but subtle nudge towards helping the girl, whilst still implying he still had a choice.

He lifted the first tube from the rack and inspected it in front of him, turning it around in his hand. To all intents and purposes, it looked a lot like water. He glanced back up at the Mediwitch in front of him, 'The same thing won't happen to me will it?' he asked, almost cringing at the hesitation in his voice.

The Mediwitch raised her eyebrows apologetically, 'You haven't been with an omega witch either, Mr Malfoy,' she said softly.

He breathed through his nose and remembered the night he had before. His cock was painfully hard, waking him every few hours with its insistent pumping. His dreams were haunted by soft faceless women, taunting him with their curves and breathless voices. Every time he woke, it was in a cold sweat, his own pheromones in the air nearly burning his eyes. The alpha in him was taking over. He looked back at the test tube in his hand, he had no choice.

This omega had been through far worse than he could imagine...regularly. She had sat in his shoes just yesterday, maybe even in the same seat, staring at the human beings reduced to scents in a tube. She was probably even suffering now. He refused to let her be brave on her own. He popped open the cork on the tube and sucked in the scent, closing his eyes waiting on the alpha pulling him into the darkness...nothing. He smelled nothing. He opened his eyes and stared down at it frowning. His eyes were moved to the Mediwitch when he noticed she was giggling.

'She picked the control tube first too,' she said, pulling her hand back from her mouth to her lap, 'maybe you two are just that compatible,' she smiled at him.

He didn't say anything, he just shrugged and picked up the next tube, leaving the control back in the rack. The next tube looked different, it was thicker than water, and when he swirled it around in the jar it reflected the rainbow back at him on the clear surface. At least this one definitely seemed different. He didn't give himself time to think about it as he pushed the cork out with his thumb, bringing it to his nose and breathed in.

It was the most alluring thing he had ever smelled in his life. The edges of his vision blurred so badly, as the alpha ripped at his consciousness, it was easier to just close them. He took another deep breath of the heavenly sweet fragrance.

He heard a 'Mr Malfoy,' off in the distance, he briefly wondered who Mr Malfoy was and who was calling him. It sounded vaguely familiar but he supposed it didn't matter. Everything seemed dull and blurry in comparison to the smell of the omega, the only sense in his mind that was sharp was the painful throbbing cock pushed up against his stomach.

Something grabbed his wrist and took the scent out from under him. He growled deep in his throat as the scent seemed to disappear. He opened his eyes and desperately sniffed the room, searching for what he had lost. A small figure stood in front of him, 'Mr Malfoy,' it said, firm but he could hear the fear in her voice.

Fear? No! He didn't want to be feared, his vision unblurred and he found himself looking into the apprehensive face of the Mediwitch. He looked to her side and noticed her wand drawn by her side, ready if he should move.

A terrible mixture of dread and guilt stabbed him right in his heart, 'I'm...I'm so sorry,' he said throwing his head into his hands. A shot of anger ran through him, 'I hate being like this,' he pulled his head out of his hands and leaned his elbows onto his knees, staring at the grey tiled floor underneath him.

'It's alright, dearie. It's why you're here is it not?' He felt her take his hand and squeeze it comfortingly. He allowed it, and held onto her hand firmly, 'We're going to help you.'

'That was her, wasn't it?' he said quietly into the floor.

She swallowed before she answered, but nevertheless she whispered back, 'yes.'

When Hermione woke up she was in an unfamiliar room. She had expected it to be white and sterile, but instead, it just looked like an average room. Well, what passed for average in the wizarding world that hadn't seemed to have left the victorian period behind. The walls were papered with olive green damask wallpaper, with dark hardwood floors. She sat up on the bed, holding her head through its pounding. She felt like she had been drinking the night before.

She buried her hands into the covers under her, they felt soft and were a similar green to the walls. She looked down to her own body and noticed she was now in a simple white nightdress that came just to her thighs. She rubbed her bare arms, finding them cold in the room. They must keep the temperature low to help the omegas in their heats. If she was honest she didn't know what an Alpha would experience, much to her frustration she could hardly find a book on the topic, just what awkward conversations she could have with Charlie but for a dragon tamer even he was shy on the topic. So she learned to stop asking.

She stood up from the bed when she spied a letter awaiting her on her bedside table. She eagerly ripped it open,

Miss Granger,

Welcome to the program. We are very sorry for the inconvenience that your unexpected heat has brought you. We are here to help you through it and should you require any assistance please ring the bell above your bedside lamp.

As detailed in your welcome pack, you have been administered with heavy hormone suppressants, allowing you to thwart the effects of your heat for a limited time. We would like to remind you that the program can not guarantee how long these suppressants will last as the effects differ from witch to witch.

Please make use of the facilities provided and dress in clothing appropriate for your heat.

The alpha chosen by you in your admittance test has accepted your invitation to join you through your heat. Please note, as per your admittance procedure detailed in your welcome pack, you have been administered a potion to limit the chances of recognising your alpha

Your chosen alpha is due to arrive in

00.59. 44

The timer on the parchment beat down with every second passed.

00.59. 44

Hermione was hit with a ball of anxiety in her chest as she watched the numbers descend. That was the time she had left before her alpha arrived. She closed her eyes and tried to ignore the omega inside her purring at the thought of *her* alpha.

She set the letter down on the nightstand and made towards the shower, she could tell in her sleep she had been sweating through her heat. They must have sedated her eventually. She was glad, being in heat all that time waiting without her toys to help would have been torture. She pulled her nightdress over her head, folding it up on the cabinet in the bathroom. She stepped into the bathtub and turned on the shower, turning it as hot as she could stand it. She knew it would be the last hot one she could tolerate for days.

She was glad to see her own products in the shower for her. At least she had packed her bag and submitted it to them before doing the tests. She hated to admit it but she was terrified of not meeting this man's expectations. What if he walked in, saw her and rejected her. It was a completely irrational fear because he had obviously selected her pheromones as well. But nevertheless she lifted her razor and started shaving her legs.

He was slowly drifting into madness staring at the knots in the door outside her bedroom. He'd been waiting for at most five-ten minutes but it felt like he had been waiting for centuries. The alpha roared in the back of his head that behind that door was an omega ready and willing for him, and it was nearly impossible for him to keep still. But he wouldn't make a move until he was instructed to, the last thing he wanted was to barge in and frighten her.

'Mr Malfoy,' he heard, but he couldn't take his eyes off the door, 'It's time.'

Her skin was already beginning to feel hot.

She had chosen a simple tank top and shorts but she was still beginning to heat, even in the cold temperature of the room. She looked down to the parchment sitting on the table in front of her.

00.00.10

She closed her eyes and took a deep breath, steadying the nerves crashing in her stomach. She hugged her arms to her belly, as if it would somehow hide her own nerves from her, and watched the countdown.

00.00.07

It was too late to change anything now. She wondered how his suppressants were holding up, if hers were already quickly fading from her. A low tingle between her legs told her they wouldn't have long before she went into heat again.

00.00.05

She fixed her bra strap uncomfortably on her shoulder and wondered what she should do with her hands.

00.00.03

Should she be standing when he comes in? Should she get up and shake his hand or is that weird?

00.00.02

She pulled a lock of her hair out from behind her ear to the side of her face.

00.00.01

She allowed herself a deep breath, as though she was going to sink under the weight of her own nerves any minute.

00.00.00

It was too late to do anything now. She just waited, staring at the doorknob, but no knock ever came, no twist of the handle. She tried to tell herself she was being irrational, it was only a few seconds but she felt like it was a century in the breathless room. She looked down at her hands, nervously wrapping around each other on the table in front of her.

Then she heard a creak from the door, and she watched in terror as the handle dropped, and the wood came slowly closer towards her. She stood up out of sheer instinct, feeling too vulnerable sitting down as the door finally opened wide enough for her to see him.

The first thing she noticed was his height, he was tall, much taller than her but not like some of the other men she had suspected of being alphas

The second thing she noticed should have been the first when he looked up from the floor towards her, she gasped. He was the same age as her, yet his hair seemed even whiter than platinum blonde. He was undoubtedly handsome, with sharp angled features and icy eyes to match his hair. She had never seen someone look so...from this world. There was nothing Muggle about him, his robes were expensive, black and fashionable, but would be very out of place even in Muggle London. Even so, despite how different he was to everyone she had ever met, something about him seemed familiar. She was immediately fascinated by him.

It wasn't until his scent hit her that she knew she was truly gone, the smell she had desperately tried to remember before he came wafted in through no effort at all. The peppermint and cedarwood drifted through her senses once again, and the hairs on her arms stood up. She tried to resist taking a deep breath of him while he stared at her.

Something similar must have been happening to him because she saw his apple bob up and down his throat, his silver eyes daring to look down her body. She was almost certain her skin was turning pink, she couldn't tell if it was from the heat or his assessment of her. She couldn't watch him, so she stared off into the hardwood floor.

'My suppressants...' his deep aristocratic voice penetrated through the silence in a warning.

'I know,' she said, feeling the effects of her own wearing off more and more with each breath of his intoxicating scent.

She heard the sound of one of his feet hitting the floor as he approached her, and she couldn't control the breathing in her chest. She was ashamed to say with each slow careful step he made towards her, the more her body prepared itself for him, sending floods of arousal through her system.

Go to him. Go to your Alpha . The omega in her head pounded in her ears, but she stood still, staring off to her right as he approached. She stood completely still in the hope it might appease the predator stalking towards her.

He walked until he was almost chest to chest with her, she'd never been this close with an alpha before. His scent was almost overwhelming, and she could drown in it. Unlike before when she became oblivious to everything around her, this time everything seemed heightened. She could feel the static electricity moving between each of their bodies, feel his breath against the side of her cheek.

She was Hermione Granger, usually so brave, but now she stood unable to move. But it was when his face moved closer towards her that she realised why she had the urge to turn her head from him. She could feel his breath on her scent glands as he smelled her. It was primal and raw, she felt vulnerable under him but she'd never felt this strange mix of fear and desire before, and she found she was famished for it.

He growled, deep and loud, almost like a purr of approval. The vibrations rattled against her scent gland and it sent ripples of arousal through her. When he gently dipped out his tongue to lick over it, she let out the gasp she had been holding. She was so aroused she pressed her thighs tight together, the heartbeat between them too intense.

He kissed her neck beside it, 'I can smell you're scared,' his voice rumbled against her neck, sending more shivers of desire through her body, 'you don't need to be scared of me, Omega. I'm going to take care of you.'

She didn't have much experience with alphas, but somehow she knew it wasn't the wizard speaking anymore. He had mostly overcome his suppressants. She had expected him to have less control, part of her expected an alpha to be forceful, out of control. But he was holding on tightly to himself. She couldn't pinpoint why, but she found that ridiculously hot.

She leaned into him, pushing her body closer to his, and he groaned at the contact but he still didn't move. She was close enough now to push her head into his neck. He turned his neck and allowed her access. She nudged his scent gland with her nose, and he sucked in a gasp at the touch. His reaction prompting her to bite her lip at the sound. She released it and allowed herself to indulge in his scent right from its source. She was immediately overwhelmed by it, the omega in her begged her to sink her teeth in, but she resisted, only allowing herself one slow torturous lick across it. It felt like her pupils widened to the size of her irises as she drank in the taste of him, the arousal reaching an unbearable state as her skin now burned piping hot, she was thrown back into her heat.

The Alpha took this as permission, and he grabbed her hips into him. She gasped and wrapped her arms around his shoulders, happily submitting into his arms. She pulled her face out of his neck to find his lips ready and waiting. The desperation in his kiss matched hers, his tongue sweeping across her lips for entry she happily supplied. She couldn't take much more of the waiting, 'Alpha, please,' she moaned against his lips, high pitch and desperate.

He groaned against her lips and started stepping in her direction, she allowed him to push her back, the omega in her delighted they were moving closer to the bed. He threw her down onto the bed, and she landed with a giggle she didn't believe herself capable of, and she delighted in watching him roughly start to take off his robes.

Her own clothes felt like it was smouldering against her skin, and the familiar pain caused by too much arousal was beginning to settle its way through her body. She ripped off her top above her head and pulled her knickers and shorts down in one fell swoop.

The alpha stopped in his tracks, the pale skin of his chest the only visible skin on show so far. It seemed to visibly pain him to see her naked in front of him. His chest was heaving as he fought a battle within himself, the silver mercury in his eyes losing the battle to the black of his pupils. She delighted in watching him watch her.

You have pleased your alpha

She reached for her breasts and squeezed them tightly in her palms, partly for her own relief and partly to contribute to his torture. It was enough to make him lose whatever battle he was fighting. He leapt on her, sucking and swirling his tongue around the nipples of one of the breasts she still held her hands. She cried out and pushed her hips towards him, 'Alpha, I need to come,' he latched onto the other one and flicked his tongue across it, staring into her eyes defiantly, 'Pleeeasse,' she cried, closing her eyes tight with the torture.

He took mercy and released her nipple with a loud kiss. He stood tall and grabbed each one of her knees in his hands, using them to wedge her legs open with a primal strength that made her clit throb. He stared at her sex and bit his lip as he pulled his eyebrows together.

You're on display for him, and he likes it.

His breathing turned into an outright pant, and he launched himself at her again. This time he latched onto her inner lips, sucking them almost entirely into his mouth. Her mouth fell open, and a voiceless scream fell from her lips as his tongue dipped only slightly into her before sliding up to her clit, lapping at it relentlessly. She was embarrassed by how quickly she was melting into his tongue, she could feel the familiar tingle of orgasm building its way through her clit at his harsh consistent strokes. He slipped his hands underneath her ass and tugged her to him, like he was a man starved.

'You taste so good, my sweet little omega,' he purred against her slit, before he shoved his face back into her. She looked down to see his platinum hair between her thighs, as she felt his tongue brutally assault her clit and it was enough to send her over the edge. Her body contorted above the bed, her spine arching up into him as she came. She wanted to scream but no sound could come out. Her senses were so acute she could feel her clit spasm against his tongue, contracting over and over as he licked her through her first orgasm.

It did nothing to deter her arousal, she instinctively knew it would take him to penetrate her for her to get any relief.

'I told you I'll take good care of you, Omega,' he said into her thigh as he kissed the soft flesh there.

'Please, Alpha. I need you.' she whined, taking her breasts into her hands once more hoping it could take some of the pressure from between her legs, 'I need you inside me,' she answered, too aroused to be ashamed.

He moaned, he actually moaned, and the noise sent another ripple of arousal through her, only heightened by her orgasm to a status where it could almost be called a mini-orgasm itself. She watched as he ripped open the front of his trousers and forced them down his legs, along with his tight boxer shorts. Her mouth opened when she saw his cock force its way out of his underwear. It was huge, and she wondered how she was going to get it inside of her, but she couldn't care. All she could think about was how it would taste.

Before she had the chance to think the omega in her forced her to leap up on her knees, kneeling on the bed in front of him. She didn't give him a chance to respond before she took

him into her mouth, using her hands to stroke the length of him she couldn't reach. She swirled her tongue around his head and he struggled to hold his own weight as he moaned for her.

'Oh you are such a good little omega, aren't you?'

You have pleased your alpha, her omega purred, supplying her with a fresh mini orgasm shooting through her womb in reward. She moaned against his cock and he must have felt the vibrations, because he had to use one of the bedposts to keep his balance, 'Merlin's beard,' he said to the ceiling, his head thrown back in pleasure, 'You'll need to stop before I knot your mouth,' his voice was soaked with desperation, much like the wetness running down her own thighs, 'Turn for me.'

She became overwhelmed with the urge to obey, keen to put herself on display for him again. She pushed her ass up towards him, delighting when she felt him line himself up to her entrance.

'Do you want this, my little Omega?' he said gently, rubbing his cock up and down her slit, causing the most painfully erotic shot through her.

'Please, Alpha, Please,' she begged him, all she cared about was having the relief from her heat.

He pushed his cock into her slowly, and she gripped each inch of him like a vice. It felt like he pressed her to her capacity, but another inch kept going with a bit of gentle coaxing. Finally he sunk into the hilt with a groan and she had never felt so full, it was an instant relief.

He moved slowly back out and into her again, it felt like he hit every pleasurable spot she had inside her as he moved. After a couple of slow strokes, he moved inside her easily. She could tell she was wet enough to likely be covering him in her juices. As much as she didn't want to admit that she loved it, it was like she was marking him with her scent, and it drove the omega in her wild.

It grew impatient with his tender strokes. The pleasure running through her was almost painful, she craved release, and his slow strokes were cruelly withholding it. She pushed her ass hard against him, slamming his cock against her cervix. He let out a strangled grunt, 'Oh you want it harder, do you?' he said through his own pants.

'Yes,' she cried, tears nearly pricking at her eyes in desperation.

His hands gripped onto her waist, squeezing possessively into the flesh before he pulled her back hard against him, causing her to moan out in nearly a scream, 'Is this what you want? You want me to fuck you rough?'

He kept picking up his speed with every thrust, and she could barely even speak. The pleasure radiating from his every stroke stole her tongue, but she managed a 'Yes, alpha,' in a high pitched cry. Her body was so wound up she felt even a feather across her clit would

make her scream out her orgasm. Her omega wanted him to fall with her, all she could think about was how he would feel cumming inside her.

‘Kn..knknknkn...knot me,’ she forced out through his thrusts.

He let out a roar of a groan, and leaned down between her thighs, rubbing her clit while he pistoned inside of her even faster. She started to feel his cock swell even bigger and she knew he was going to knot. She couldn’t hold it, she screamed out her release as it washed over her. She had never felt anything like this, it pulsed up and down her body as her toes curled behind her. He groaned and shoved his cock deep into her as his knot swelled inside of her. She could feel his hot cum shooting up deep into her and it only lengthened her orgasm. His hands dug into her hips, as his head landed against her back.

Her pleasure waves started to lower with each one, until they hit a quiet feeling of satisfaction she had never managed to reach on her own or with anyone else. She sat panting on her hands and knees until he moved behind her, lifting and manoeuvring her like she weighed nothing onto his lap. She lay her back against his chest as they caught their breath, simply enjoying the feeling of his knot inside her.

‘Alpha?’ she asked weakly.

He nuzzled his face into her neck, ‘yes?’ he said, kissing her gland as his arms settled around her waist.

‘What do I smell like to you?’

‘Irresistible. Sweet. Like strawberries and roses,’ he managed through his pants.

‘Hmmm,’ was all she had the strength to say as she closed her eyes relaxing against him.

Chapter End Notes

Well, I hope you enjoyed!! Imagine if they knew who they had just fucked!! Will they find out? You'll have to read on and see...

Please let me know your thoughts!! Especially if you found it hot ;) I might be a little slow replying because I've fallen behind but I will reply and I do read and love every single one of them <3

Lots of Love,
Comfort

Chapter 3: Strawberries and Peppermint

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

The alpha released its grip on his consciousness, sinking slowly into the back of his mind in a contented purr.

He couldn't describe what had just happened to him. He was no virgin, but he felt like it at that moment, his knot still pulsing inside of her. He had never done that before, he didn't even think his cock was as big as that before. He started to regret spending so much of the time he spent researching on omegas and none of it on how his own body would react. He stupidly assumed nothing would change.

He never would have guessed in his wildest dreams that knotting would feel so good. Sexually it felt amazing, his orgasm had slowly ebbed away rather than the usual abrupt ending, sending spikes of pleasure through him like a heartbeat long after he had cum. Then there was how it felt mentally, he finally had space inside his own head to breathe, the alpha in him had become more and more demanding as he denied its needs. Now it felt like he had finally regained control of his own mind, with his alpha merely stroking his consciousness in the back of his mind.

The hot skin laid against his chest began to cool, and it allowed him to focus on the feeling of her breathing against his chest. With his alpha finally retracted, he could stop kissing and marking her glands with his scent, and instead just rest his face into her neck, comforted by their mixed scents around his face. Sweet strawberries freshened with the smell of...mint. So that's what he smelled like...he was happy with that it was clean and natural.

She shifted slightly under him, and it brought his attention immediately back to her, he pulled her in closer against him to make her comfortable. There was something about this witch, he was instantly at ease with her, and all he wanted was to make sure she was content. He assumed it must be biological, because he'd never had this urge with anyone but her.

He didn't know if he had ever met an omega before, but he found it hard to believe he could walk right past one if they were all like her. She was beautiful to him: her dainty features complete with a light dusting of freckles, her deep dark brown eyes rimmed with long black eyelashes, and the mass of wild hair on her head tamed into tight curls. Not to mention the way her body fit perfectly against his.

She shifted again in his arms, this time moving her back from his chest as she woke and looked around her sleepily. He could tell the precise moment she realised he was still inside of her, because her back stiffened and she stopped still. The awkwardness of the moment was enough to drain what arousal remained in his cock to keep his knot swollen. She must have felt it loosen, because she lifted herself off of him and pulled a blanket around her front, covering her body from his view. He wasn't facing the omega anymore, but the witch housing it, and her brown eyes were widened in embarrassment and discomfort.

Your omega is hiding herself from you, you have frightened her , displeased her.

He ignored the alpha's growl in his head and lifted a pillow beside him, using it to cover himself from her in hopes it might put her at ease, 'How are you feeling?' he asked, trying his best to make his voice sound comforting, but the dry rasp that left his throat fell far short of comforting. He tried to swallow to soften his voice, conscious of the fact that a loud clearing of his throat could scare the witch away further.

'Better,' her voice barely came out, she cleared her own throat and started again, 'more like me.'

'Good,' he said gently, looking down at the pillow in front of him, 'me too.'

They sat in the silence for a moment before he spoke, seizing his opportunity to speak to the witch and not the omega, 'I, ah, need you to know something.'

She jumped, a little surprised by his voice through the quiet, she looked at him but didn't respond. He lifted his eyes from the pillow and tried to communicate his sincerity with her, 'I won't hurt you.'

She readjusted in her seat, awkwardly shifting from side to side onto crossed legs. She avoided his eyes for a moment before she hardened her face to unsuccessfully hide her vulnerability, 'How do you know?' It was a question, but it sounded more like an accusation.

She doesn't trust you. My omega is scared of you

He laid his hands on the cushion in front of him, 'Because my alpha is lecturing me that I'm scaring you, and it physically pains me to see you look at me like that.'

She looked to his hands in his lap, watching him nervously rub his thumb with his other hand. She seemed to consider what he said, only follow up with, 'How do you know you won't when...'

'When your heat kicks in?' he finished for her.

She nodded, meeting his eyes again. She looked guarded, but it wasn't enough for him not to see she was worried.

'Did I hurt you last time?' he knew he hadn't, but his hands still threatened to sweat, terrified of her answer.

'No,' she said sharply.

'And you're...not in your heat right now, are you?'

'No,' she repeated, voice lifting in curiosity at the vowel, as is prompting him to state where he was going with this.

'Then answer this.'

Her body gave the slightest jolt when he suddenly sat up from the bed and leaned back onto his knees, still holding the pillow across his crotch, he swallowed, preparing himself for what he was about to ask, 'would you let me do that again?' he said quietly, trying desperately to keep his alpha from his voice as he offered himself up to her. His cock gave a slight jolt of its own as he felt her eyes trail down his chest.

Her mouth fell open, as a flush thrashed its way across her cheeks and down her neck, 'Well..I...' she stuttered.

'Say no and I'll leave this room and you won't ever hear from me again,' it physically hurt him to say it, he knew every step toward that door would kill him, not to mention rub salt into the wound in his pride if she refuses him. She stared at him dumbfounded until he couldn't take her silence any longer. He looked down to the bed below him, clenched his jaw and forced his walls back up. He moved to get off the bed before he was stopped by a small hand on his forearm.

'Wait!'

He stopped and looked up at her, eyes connecting with the nerves clearly reflected in hers. He kept his body completely still as she moved her hand up his bicep. Each little touch from her was electric, lifting the hairs on his arm as her hand travelled. It eventually landed on his chest when she answered, 'Yes.'

They shared a moment where icy grey and warm brown eyes assessed each other like wild animals unsure of the others next move. The cold from her palm was beginning to warm against his chest, 'Do it again,' she whispered breathily. He watched chest rise and fall in deeper faster breaths in front of him but he refused to move, determined to show her his restraint.

She leaned closer towards him, and he watched her freckles get closer to him until he couldn't make them out anymore. Her chest lightly brushed his and he almost hissed at the feeling of her nipples brushing against his chest. He couldn't help but breathe in her strawberry-rose air, letting it cloud his mind, but keeping a tight grip on himself.

He closed his eyes as the world became too unfocused for him to see, the last thing he saw was the tentative desire in her eye before she cautiously brushed her soft lips against his, and his alpha awoke in the back of his mind.

She wants this. She wants you . Take her.

He silenced its pleas in favour of closing his eyes and lightly sucking her lips against his own. His heart thundered in his chest when he felt her move closer towards him, pressing her breasts into him. He kept his urge to touch her buried down as he let her push him back onto the bed by his shoulders, pulling her lips from his own and replacing it with the intimacy of looking into his eyes from above him.

She's moving further away!

When his back connected with the bed below him, she moved the pillow covering him and lifted her leg to straddle him. He loosely wrapped his fingers around her tiny wrist, stopping her movements entirely as she looked blankly at him. He lifted it to his lips, he stared back at her as he enjoyed the hitch in her breath when his lips connected with her gland, smirking when he pulled back, “You’re skipping a step,” he taunted, knowing full well that even his breath against her sensitive gland would be sensual for her.

She looked down at him, eyes wide with surprise, before she tentatively gripped the base of his cock.

Yes, yes, let her.

His hips jolted up into her grip, desperate for the motion from her hand, but nevertheless he shoved his need down, ‘No, not me,’ he managed to ground out only seconds before she could suck his head into her mouth. He shifted himself further down onto the bed so his head was no longer resting on a pillow, and adjusted his shoulders beside her thighs.

She seemed to register his meaning and tentatively lifted her leg to the other side of his shoulders. He was immediately hit with the overwhelming scent of her, and it took everything in him to shove his alpha down as his cock tensed almost painfully.

Instead, he wrapped his arms around her thighs, gripping the flesh of her ass, before placing a wet kiss onto the soft skin of her inner thigh by his head. She gasped out a breath and her thighs wiggled underneath his mouth, ‘I have something to prove to you,’ he said as he placed another kiss higher than before.

Her skin was getting hot against his hands, and when she replied it was breathless, ‘What do you need to prove, alpha?’

‘Me,’ this time when he kissed her he followed it with a swipe of his tongue.

‘Yes, alpha,’ she breathed, her skin now hot against his lips. He smiled, content he had teased her omega from her. He had never felt more powerful than now, lying under her at her mercy. His cock was rock solid, and he could feel the pre-cum gathering at his head. There was something irresistible about giving himself up to her, with the taste of her on his lips teasing him. He wanted to shove his face into her, letting her strawberry juices scent even his face, like she owned him.

‘I’m proving I can submit myself to you, sweet omega,’ it was the last thing he said before he gave into his alpha and plunged his tongue into her, delighting in how she ground her hips against him.

This was nothing like what she expected from an alpha. The last thing she expected was to hear his alpha voice tell her he would submit to her, it was the sexiest thing she had ever heard in her life. And here he was, a full-grown alpha, lying underneath her, lapping at her clit like it was addictive while leaving his own pleasures unfulfilled. She had never felt more powerful as his fingers started to dig into her ass, pulling her closer to him. The slight pain in the pleasure only made it more intense as her omega praised his strength.

He could overpower you if he wanted to. He could lift you up and throw you off him and pound you. But he's letting you have him.

She gripped onto the headboard and squeezed it almost as tightly as her closed eyes. Her jaw lay open. Her hips took on a life of their own, grinding her clit against the soft wetness of his tongue. She found she couldn't speak but her omega took speech over in her mind.

Alpha wants to give you pleasure let him. A shot of pleasure swept over her, and she wasn't sure if it was the wizard below her or her omega, *Please your alpha.*

The heat of her skin was almost at boiling, she desperately needed relief. All she wanted was to touch him. She took her omega's command literally, and moved out of his hold on her ass. To her surprise he let her go immediately without so much as a growl, revoking everything he had holding her there. She moved her legs to straddle him facing the other direction, as soon as she was open to him again he leapt at her, sucking her clit into his mouth and swiping it with his tongue. She moaned out in the pleasure of it, but stuck herself to her task, she leaned her abdomen against his and took his cock into her hand.

He growled into her, and the vibrations sent ripples of pleasure through her body. She took her opportunity and sunk her mouth onto his cock, sucking it while he licked her. She could feel the pressure rising in her clit. It was all too much, sucking and licking him only heightened her arousal, his moans sending vibrations through her. She knew she was going to come but her mouth was so full of him she couldn't tell him. She could only moan against the cock buried in her mouth while it broke over her. He relentlessly licked her through each wave of her orgasm until she squealed from the sensitivity.

She felt the loss of his mouth and set to catching her breath while the last waves of her orgasm washed over her. To her surprise she felt something sink inside of her, reigniting her pleasure as he pushed against the sensitive spots inside of her. She arched her back and pushed her ass into him, the omega desperate for more.

'That's it, you've only had one of your orgasms love,' his voice was dark and deep, the alpha tone sending shivers down her body with its power, 'we have plenty more to go.'

She felt blunt pressure on the flesh of her ass when she realised he had bitten her there, it sent a new wave of her juices through her. If she wasn't so turned on and in her heat she might have been embarrassed by it but now she didn't care if it ran down her thighs. Her brain had almost melted to mush by the way he was repeatedly brushing the soft spot inside her hard with his fingertips. She lost the strength in her arms and dropped her upper body down onto the bed, her rear end firmly as his mercy.

She felt something brush against her clit, and she pulled away from the sensitivity, immediately regretting that his fingers had stopped slamming into her.

'Do you trust that I can make you come, omega?'

'Yes, alpha,' she whined, hungry from the loss of his fingers' movement inside of her.

'Will you let me take another orgasm from you?' the alpha asked.

Yes yes yes yes

She hadn't realised she had said it out loud until he resumed his movements, fingers dragging deliciously across that spot inside of her. His thumb returned to her clit, and she grinned her way through the sensitivity with her toes clawed and teeth clenched.

'I know your clit can take more than one for me.'

Suddenly the feeling became less and less uncomfortable, and to her surprise it actually started to feel good, actually it felt amazing. She started grinding herself up against his hand, finding herself closer to orgasm than she thought.

'Alpha, I'm going to come' she whined.

'That's a good omega, come for me,' his alpha voice vibrated through her sending her over the edge. Her mouth opened in a silent scream as he kept stroking her through, softly and slower now to ease her over sensitive flesh.

It slipped out of her grasp too quickly, and when she came to she found her heat had come back in full force. The pumping between her legs was too much, and she could feel the sweat beginning to coat her skin.

'Please alpha!' she called out, 'Take me. I need...' she said as she spun to face him, planting her lips on his in a fierce kiss as she readjusted her legs around his thighs. She could taste herself off his tongue and it sent a shock of pleasure through her knowing her scent was all over him. She bit his bottom lip, and dragged it away from his teeth, content in her own show of dominance over him.

'Take what you need,' he said, letting her hold onto his lip until she bit down hard enough to draw a little blood. She sat back, and watched the hazy lust in his eyes as he watched her lick his blood from her lip, she delighted in the tortured look in his eyes. She reached out with her thumb and stroked it across his wound, smiling at him while he looked at her hungrily. She gathered a little of the bright red liquid, and stroked her thumb down between her breasts, marking herself with him. He growled deep in his throat as he clearly fought with every instinct he had, but he couldn't help but grind his hips up into her.

Fuck me alpha, knot me, mark me, please

She hadn't realised she had said it out loud until he groaned hungrily underneath her. She impatiently grabbed his cock and lined it up to her entrance, sinking down on him in one smooth motion. They moaned together as they adjusted to each other. She ground her hips forward and closed her eyes with the pleasure of it.

He sat forward and held onto her back as she rode him. It was when she felt his lips on her scent gland she knew she was fucked.

Mark me, Mark me, Mark me, Mark me please

She twisted her hands into his hair as he licked and sucked at her sensitive gland. The pleasure shot across her unexpectedly, and she moaned and came for him again, clinging on to the white hair in her hand as he used his hand at her lower back to keep her moving over him through her orgasm, as she pumped the cum out of him. She could feel his teeth sharpening over her gland and it heightened the desperate pleasure coursing through her as his knot started to swell inside her. She threw her head back when the last the waves faded away, letting him kiss and lick along her neck, trusting him with the most vulnerable part of her body.

She smiled up into the ceiling, enjoying the twitches of his cock inside of her, and his hands at her waist as her skin started to cool. Her heat finally satiated. For now.

Chapter End Notes

Sorry for the wait I hope it's worth it!!

Please let me know what you thought I love to hear it!!! Thank you so much for reading, commenting, subscribing and leaving kudos! <3 <3

Lots of love,
Comfort

Chapter 4: Roses and Cedarwood

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

There was something vaguely familiar about him, but she couldn't decide what it was.

She sat on the bed and watched his chest push up the covers of the duvet only to fall back down with his deep exhale. She studied his face, the pale flawless skin that stretched around his sharp masculine features. Staring at his slightly pointed chin she wondered why something in her mind told her she knew him...But she supposed it would seem like that. She'd been told that even if he was her best friend she wouldn't recognise him, so of course the most likely answer was her brain was trying to impress that reality on it, like a placebo.

His breathing choked on a light snore as he twitched in his sleep, pulling his face from her view and replacing it with his perfectly white hair. How could she possibly know him? As if she would ever forget a head of hair like that, potion or not.

She slowly shifted her weight on the bed to allow her to slip her leg out from under her. Her foot landed on the floor next to her left one and she slowly pulled herself from the mattress, trying her best not to wake the sleeping alpha beside her. She shook her own head at herself as she tiptoed to the bathroom, displeased at the sudden desire to preen herself for him. When she saw herself in the mirror she slapped her hand against her mouth. Her hair hadn't looked this bad since she was on the run during the war. She laughed a little as she thought about herself looking quite a bit like a mushroom.

She took a deep breath and pushed her hair back behind her shoulders and inspected the area she was most afraid of, her neck. She was right to be worried. All along the column of her neck, raised purple skin shone out at her where he had licked and sucked before. She had always hated those marks, thought them distasteful, but she had to press her thighs together to quench her sudden thirst for touch there. She liked the idea of being marked by him, it felt possessive, like a biological collar around her neck screaming to everyone that he was her alpha. She knew the thought came from the omega, and she pinched one of the marks between her fingers to stop the heat building in her skin.

She moved closer to the mirror and saw the impression of his teeth where he had bitten around her neck. Her stomach dropped and she frantically felt around her neck, searching for her gland. The sensitive skin sent a flare of pain as she finally found it, her touch too rough in its panic. She flattened her hand against her neck and breathed a sigh of relief, his teeth had marked everywhere but her gland.

She turned her head and looked to the closed door as if she could see through it, to him sleeping peacefully on the bed, and she felt a stab of guilt. She knew it must have been hard for him to give up control like he did, to prove to her he wasn't a threat, but she couldn't help it. After everything she had read about alphas she was wary of them, how they could lose control of their minds and bodies simply by *not* being around an omega, being around one seemed like it could be even worse.

She shoved the thought to the back of her mind and started to brush her teeth, it was unfair of her to see him like that, so far he had given her the choice with everything. It would be hard for him, but she felt like if she said no he would stop. The alpha in him seemed genuinely horrified that she would be afraid of him, she could see the look in his eyes when he believed it.

She rinsed her mouth and turned on the shower, allowing the water to heat. She tried to brush a comb through her hair while she waited, but it was no use, she would have to wait until she had her conditioner in. She placed her hand under the water running in the shower to test the temperature. She hissed as the boiling hot water scalded her skin and immediately pulled her hand back. She looked down at it, expecting the skin to be red-raw and blistering, but it looked exactly the same as before. She frowned and ran her thumb over her palm, expecting to feel the skin sensitive and painful, but her thumb glided across harmlessly.

She looked into the shower and found the temperature was set nicely in the middle range between hot and cold. She twisted the knob around to cold and put her reaction down to her heat. She waited for the steam to clear from the water before she tentatively touched the water with her fingertip, the water felt cool and soothing as it formed a path down her palm. She lifted her leg over the side of the bathtub and stood under the water.

She rinsed out her hair and smiled as she rubbed the shampoo through her curls. So far this was going better than she expected, the alpha wasn't what she expected at all, and she was glad for it. She had never felt this good during her heat either, she wasn't sure if this was just how a heat was with an alpha, or if this one was easier because it had come on earlier. Either way she was glad she had listened to Ginny and Harry in the end, if her other heats were even close to like this then she could deal with being an omega.

As she fingered the conditioner through her hair she noticed the water getting cooler. She rolled her eyes, typical of the Ministry to cheap out. So she squeezed her shower gel onto the body puff and began soothing circles across her skin. It felt amazing to feel clean, and as much as she hated to admit it she was thinking about him. She wondered what it would feel like to have him shower standing behind her, with his hands spreading the soap across her skin. She smiled and tried to lock the thought away as her face warmed under the water, but the thought persisted. In her mind she would feel his hot breath on her neck, maybe even his lips against her gland. It was then she noticed that the water wasn't getting colder, she was getting hotter, but it was too late. The arousal building between her legs hit, and she panicked. She lifted the showerhead from its holder and turned the water to as cold as it would go, holding it directly above her head she rinsed the ice water through her hair and face, but it did nothing to soothe the heat of her skin. She lifted her foot onto the side of the bath and held the shower directly to the source of the heat, but rather than feel soothed she cried out in pleasure as the water touched her sensitive skin. Her hand was stuck, she couldn't pull the water's touch from herself, but knew it was enough.

'Alpha...' she whispered through the torture.

She let her foot fall from the bath and she landed on her knees, doubled up from the intensity of her craving. She was now out of reach of the showerhead, and she tried to rub using her own fingers but again it wasn't enough.

‘Alpha!’ she called out to him desperately while sliding her own fingers into herself, finding it no more satisfying than a drink of water to someone who hadn’t eaten in days. Tears fell down her face as she called to him again through her sobs, knowing it to be in vain. He was asleep and she had stupidly locked the door, even if by some miracle he heard her calling over the water.

Hermione could see her wand sitting uselessly by the sink, and she gritted her teeth, ‘Accio wand!’ she pushed out through her teeth, holding her free hand out in its direction. The wand sat still, oblivious to the cries of its mistress.

She’s beautiful, she’s in his arms and she’s beautiful. He doesn’t pay attention to anything around him, it’s all darkness next to the beacon of light staring back at him. She’s pulling out of his arms, and he wants to hold onto her, he tries gripping her a little harder but she smiles and squeezes her hands around his forearms. It feels reassuring, it’s okay to let her go.

He stands still and watches as she moves, her skin is golden but her hair is honey brown. He doesn’t even notice the water under her feet until it ripples against the blackness under her dainty feet. Suddenly her hair is dampened by water falling from somewhere in the void. It soaks her hair and turns golden as it touches her, golden flecks of water trailing down her dark hair and sliding across her skin.

He stands mesmerised as the water caresses her body just as smoothly as her own hands rubbing against her skin. He swallows in an attempt to encourage himself to breathe. Somehow he wants to move to her and stand just watching her at the same time. She rubs the water into her hair and the water running down her skin transitions to a neon blue, contrasting against her golden skin warming to an orange. He distractedly watched a trail of blue water slide down her spine.

‘Alpha...’ she whispers against the water, holding her arm out to him for him to come to her.

He tries to move but finds his feet won’t answer his call to action.

‘Alpha!’ she calls again, and her skin glows a deeper darker orange.

He tries to call back to her, but he can’t make any sound. He begins to panic as he feels her distress reaching out to him across the darkness.

‘Alpha please’ she sobs, as she falls to her knees on the floor.

‘Hermione!’ he manages to shout before the world returns to him in full colour.

Draco bolted upright in the bed before his consciousness even returned to him, his mind instantly clouded with panic. He looked beside him and found no sign of his witch, and his heart thumped angrily in his chest. He leapt out of bed and saw no sign of her anywhere in the room. He ran to the bathroom door and pressed his ear against it. A weak little sob that sounded distinctly like, ‘Alpha,’ penetrated his ear through the door, and it was like a stab wound to his heart.

Your omega is in trouble, she's hurt!

He didn't even think to lift his wand before he slammed his shoulder against the door, forcing it open despite the lock. What he saw almost crippled him. She was on her knees in the bath, desperately touching herself to ease her heat. The water was spitting at her chest from its position dangling on the wall. Her eyes met his, and the anguish in her eyes nearly killed him. He ran straight to her, uncaring that the ice-cold water was splashing onto his skin when he felt how hot she was. Her skin was so warm it nearly burnt him when his chest bumped against her back.

'Alpha' she groaned as she lowered her chest to the bottom of the bath, forcing her ass up into the air. He lost his breath as the sight of her bent over for him coupled with the smell of her arousal hit him, and he couldn't help but lightly grip her wrist and pull her fingers out from her. She wriggled at the loss of contact, but her complaint was quickly shuttered when he slammed two of his fingers into her. She immediately melted under his fingers, pushing her ass closer to him to get his fingers deeper. It was fucking intoxicating to him.

'Please alpha, I need you inside me,' she hissed out between the thrusts of his fingers.

'Fuck...' he whispered as he looked down at his rapidly growing cock.

He gave in to the urge. He pulled out his fingers and held his cock against her, dipping it to quickly surprise her with its contact with her clit. She moaned and tried to rub herself against it, but he had already lined himself up to enter her. He didn't bother going slow, she was already pretty much there. He knew she wouldn't last through to his orgasm but he didn't care- all that mattered was stopping his omega from feeling any pain, and she didn't anymore if the way she moaned and leaned into his thrusts was any indication. It didn't take her long to reach her orgasm once he stroked her clit with his fingers. She fell apart around him, and the way she spasmed around his cock as she came made his own mouth fall open as he panted. Eventually, he slowed down his thrusts as her whines turned into breathlessness, and her skin evened out its temperature.

He pulled out when she rose onto her hands, 'Thank you,' she said, looking at him shyly from over her neck. He pulled his legs out from under him and lay against the bath, uncaring that she could see him. He flattened both hands out against the sides of the bath and allowed himself a moment to relax after he replied, 'what I'm here for,' in a breathy lazy laugh.

She pulled her wet hair around her neck and he noticed the marks he'd made on her. He looked at them with a lethargic smile, his alpha pleased he had managed to mark her in some way, even if it couldn't be the way he wanted to.

mine

She turned around to face him, and he just smiled at her. He didn't have it in him to care that his legs were spread on either side of her small body and that he was still painfully hard in front of her. The witch's eyes didn't linger on his face for long, he watched her stare at his neck for a moment and he assumed his neck was covered much like hers and found he was more than happy with that arrangement.

hers

Soon her eyes travelled down the rest his body and it felt like little tingles everywhere her eyes landed. When they travelled down his torso to his cock, he watched her take him in. His cock betrayed his arousal with a slight jerk at the touch of her eyes. They sat in silence as he wondered what she would do, until he felt her small hands touch his knees. He forced his body still as her hands travelled up his thighs, forcing her body closer to him.

He sucked in a breath when he felt hers caress against his cock before she took it into her warm soft mouth and began sucking him. His eyes rolled back as her tongue made contact with his head, and it was like a quick shock of electricity shooting down his cock into his body. He pulled his eyes back to her, finding her staring at him with his cock in her mouth, it was one of the most erotic sights he had ever seen.

‘Fucking Merlin,’ he groaned to no one as her eyes met his while she deliberately pushed him further into her mouth. She pulled her mouth off him with a pop and gripped him in her hand, stroking him up and down while she looked for some kind of approval from him. He reached forward and rubbed his thumb against the side of her chin, she twisted her head and sucked his thumb between her lips while she pumped him. He couldn’t help himself, he pulled his thumb from her lips and replaced it with his own, kissing her deeply while pushing his hips up into her hand desperately.

He felt a small hand press against his chest, and he let her push him back against the bath. She hovered her face above where she was stroking him and the image of her face covered in him stuck to his mind. He involuntarily pushed his hips up into her hand at the thought, and as if she read his mind she smiled at him, before sticking her tongue out and pressing it against the head of his cock while she stroked him.

‘Omega,’ his voice rippled through the air, deepened with his alpha’s pleasure.

But she didn’t stop, she pumped him harder. He couldn’t get the image of his cum dripping down onto the purple marks on her neck out of his mind, it would be the closest thing to claiming her. He could feel his control slipping as his thighs jerked beside her. He felt the urge to close his eyes as his orgasm began to overtake him, but he refused to miss the ropes of white liquid spilling out onto her tongue and dripping down her chin. She pulled her white tongue into her mouth and swallowed. She kept pumping his cock and lowered it to her chest, covering her purple marks with the last of the white fluid.

He could hardly believe his luck as he let his fingers loosen their grip on the side of the bathtub. She looked up at him, and she was even more beautiful than in his dream, with his pleasure smeared across her scent glands on her neck. He reached up and repeated his action from before, swiping some of his cum on her chin onto his thumb, surprised when she took it into her mouth again. He bit his lip as his cock gave out one last dose of pleasure at the sight.

‘Where have you been all my life witch?’ he said breathlessly.

She released him and smiled, ‘Maybe right in front of you for all we know,’ she said with his thumb pressed against her bottom lip.

‘No, I’d remember you, potion or not,’ he said as his head fell back against the bath and he looked up to the ceiling.

‘Anyway,’ he pulled his head back to look at her, a drop of his seed trailing down her chest, ‘how about,’ he stood up on his weak knees and pulled her up with him, not caring when their chests pressed together, ‘we get cleaned up and get something to eat?’

‘Like a date?’ she asked with mischief in the smile she gave him.

He raised an eyebrow at her, ‘yeah, like a date. Nothing says romance like a medical facility.’

They both laughed at the idea, but he took great pleasure in looking after her after that. He didn’t think he was that kind of guy, but bathing and feeding her supplied a contentment he didn’t know he possessed. Especially not for a stranger. There was something about this woman that spoke to a different side of him. He had never felt the kind the protective instinct he felt for her, how he felt like he couldn’t breathe when he thought she was hurt. He put it down to the alpha in him, but if he was honest...he wasn’t sure.

Draco wished he could remember what he said when he woke up from his dream, something told him it was important, but it was gone the moment he opened his eyes and eluded him ever since.

Chapter End Notes

FINALLY SHE PUT THE NEXT DAMN CHAPTER UP!

I'm sorry I'm not the most reliable writer...(huge understatement) but I hope this makes up for some of it...ANNNNDD there's a new chapter on the way as we speak! It just needs editing- It's got smut, and some movement towards their identity reveal... so hopefully I've redeemed myself a little ;)

What did you think? I always love to know!! What about Draco calling out Hermione's name!? He knows on some level... I'm a tease, aren't I?... I must say though... the big reveal is coming up verrrrry soon!

Tell me-If you're enjoying the story- what's your favourite part so far?

Great to be back!

Lots of love,
Comfort
xxx

Chapter 5: Deatheaters and Mudbloods

Chapter Notes

Hold on to your hats... this chapter is... well, I'm sure you can tell from the title...I'll let you see for yourself. Don't say I didn't warn you.. ;)

See the end of the chapter for [more notes](#)

‘You’re not what I imagined you’d be,’ she smiled into the ceiling when she saw his head bolt off the pillow beside her suddenly.

‘Well what were you expecting?’ she pretended not to notice the charmingly confused frown he threw at her already defensive.

She tried to hold back her laughter as she lifted their conjoined hands. She never would have believed she’d be holding hands with this man so suddenly, but there was something so freeing about knowing she might never have to see him again or find out who he really is if she chose to.

‘You’re tall....’ she said as she inspected the veins flowing through the hand in front of hers, ‘...and broad’ she twisted their hands around to show her much smaller hand enveloped by his, ‘...your hands are so much bigger than mine...’

She could see his grey eyes watching the movement of their joined hands as she twisted his hand back to the front, ‘...but you aren’t as big as I thought you’d be,’ his eyes flashed back up to hers, alpha primed to be offended. She laughed and let their hands fall back down in between them, ‘The way some of the books talked about alphas you’d think they were the size of Hagrid,’ she giggled.

‘You know Hagrid?’ he asked into the newfound silence as Hermione realised what she had done.

‘You know *Hagrid*?’ he asked again, the excitement brightening his voice. She tried to speak but every time she found her words failed her. All she could do was close her eyes trying to avoid his while she smiled up into the ceiling. He wasn’t having it.

She felt the bed ripple under her back with his movements and she smiled into her self-inflicted darkness, and when she opened them her heart pounded in her chest. He was hovering above her, looking a lot like the cat that got the cream, and there was something undeniably...sexy about it.

‘You’ve made a mistake witch,’ he said low and full of playful menace.

She swallowed but refused to take her eyes off his. His low and powerful voice coupled with his proximity was...enough to alert her to the fact that his arms were trapping her under him. If he dropped his body much farther, his naked chest would be pressed to hers, and if he dropped everything further he would be...

‘Oh have I?’ she said innocently as she sucked her bottom lip between her teeth, trying and failing to hide the Cheshire smile shining up into the mischief in his grey eyes.

‘Because now...,’ he leaned closer into her face, chest hovering dangerously above hers, ‘I know you went to Hogwarts.’

She wanted to lose her breath and give in to the power radiating off him, but instead, she smirked, ‘And how *exactly* do you know that for sure?’ She raised both her eyebrows at him, ‘peut-être que je suis de Beauxbatons?’ she asked, smug that her french accent was perfect.

‘No, no, you are definitely *not* from Beauxbatons,’ he dropped his head and sniggered into the space between them.

Her mouth dropped at his insolence, and she lightly pushed against his shoulder laughing breathily herself, ‘And why couldn’t I be?’

She didn’t know how he did it, but the hand on his shoulder was suddenly in the grip of his huge hand, held against the bed beside her face. She couldn’t help but gasp, and automatically tilt her head and close her eyes expecting to feel his lips on hers. She could feel him moving closer to her, his breath ghosting over her face, but the kiss never came. Instead, when she opened her eyes she was looking into his white hair on the left side of her vision. She felt him smile against her neck, and her pulse must have raced against his lips.

‘Because,’ the feeling of his breath against her neck, so close but so far from her gland, made her want to press her chest up into his, ‘potion or not...’ his voice grumbled against her skin as he affectionately nudged her earlobe with his nose, ‘the sight of you floating down the Great Hall in those silky skirts would be something I’d never forget,’ the playfulness in his voice was gone, replaced with a quiet intensity. There was something in his voice that sent vibrations down her neck, that made her sit deathly still under his hold. It was as if there was something dangerous about him in that moment, but rather than being afraid of it she revelled in it.

‘They’d have to oblivate me to madness to forget you like that,’ he pressed a kiss hard against her neck, almost as if his lips were the only thing holding back his teeth from sinking into her flesh.

She should have been appalled that he knew something about her, but if she was honest, it excited her, playing these games with him. Somehow it felt like no matter what happened here there would be no consequences, for the first time in her life, it wasn’t about what would happen after.

She swallowed, pulling herself out of the spell he had put her under, ‘Maybe I’m simply a friend of his,’ she said, bringing the fun back into her voice.

He laughed and the tension in the air lost its edge. She pushed back against his hand, releasing her own to press against his chest again. He merely let her push him back, but he wouldn't go farther than arm's length from her. 'Let's just call it a hunch,' he replied, pulling his mouth into a smirk.

She couldn't help but smile back at him, there was something incredibly childish about the smug way he was looking at her. She pulled her lip into her mouth to subdue her smile, and then in an attempt to sound more serious she whispered, 'We shouldn't even be having this conversation,' but the excitement in her voice gave her away.

'Yet here we are,' he said before lowering his head to her neck again. She felt his breath against her neck as he breathed her in, tickling along her gland, 'And now I know where to start finding you,' his alpha voice rippled across her neck and she suddenly became very aware of his position on top of her, as he started to lay soft kisses along her neck.

'What are you doing?' she tried to sound like she was still in the playful mood and not becoming incredibly aroused by his proximity.

'Trying to remember what you smell like,' he replied, voice rougher and more strained than before, like she wasn't talking to the wizard anymore. Something about that set between her legs on fire. She felt his lips move across her neck, smile turning sinister, 'so I can hunt you down, Omega.'

Something primal in her purred, and he responded by laying his body flatter against hers, so she could feel his growing erection lying against her pelvis, 'You like that don't you? Do you want me to hunt you down? Chase you?'

She could feel the power radiating off him, and it was intoxicating. She wasn't sure when, or even if, she decided to lift her neck to him, exposing her scent gland. He made a pained sound into her neck, sending ripples through the sensitive skin that made her squeeze her legs around him in an effort to gain some find of friction. It pushed his erection harder against her hip, frustratingly too far from where she really wanted it.

He licked his tongue against her gland and she felt the strength in her legs crumble, 'Hard to believe we were likely at Hogwarts at the same time,' he leaned on his right arm as he lifted one of her legs up against his hips, shifting his cock to lie on top of her folds, 'because if I had of had one small trace of your scent I wouldn't have stopped until I had you,' the alpha licked her gland again humming contentedly with the taste, 'under me...' the next thing Hermione felt was him blowing cold air onto her damp gland, 'like this.'

Her body began to move her hips against him, rubbing her juices against the cock pinned in between them. All she could imagine was the thrill of the chase, running knowing he was on her trail, hungry. She should have been repulsed, but the Omega in her wanted it. She wanted to tease him, to be his prey. He hissed and pulled her other leg around him as he kissed up to her jaw, eventually sucking her bottom lip into his in an urgent kiss, and she gave him everything he took.

The tension in her clit was almost unbearable, she felt like she would unravel the minute he touched her. She squealed into his mouth when he plunged into her unexpectedly. She

immediately broke off their kiss in her need to pant with his urgent thrusts. He lay his forehead against hers as he dragged his cock in and out of her in an excruciatingly pleasant rhythm. His grey eyes bore into hers, and he looked every bit an alpha, like a wolf staring hungrily at his prey as he pinned down her wrists, stroking her scent glands there with his thumbs.

Her climax was building embarrassingly quick, but she could tell by the demanding pace of their hips moving together he was there too.

‘Alpha’ she whined. He seemed to sense she was close from her words because his eyebrows came together like it was the hottest thing he had ever heard.

‘I know,’ he grumbled roughly, ‘Come to me, Omega.’

Her orgasm broke over her body and she furiously thrust her hips against him in an effort to speed up the already gruelling pace. With each thrust of his cock into her it felt like another orgasm ripping her apart, especially when his knot started to swell inside of her. When he suddenly growled out his release his grip on her wrists tightened, pressing hard against her scent glands.

‘Alpha!’ she screamed as the final wave tore through her.

Something in her snapped, and she plunged her face into his neck, licking, sucking and biting at any flesh she could get near. She knew she had found his gland when his heavy panting produced a strangled noise from his throat. He forced himself even harder into her when she sucked onto his gland, despite the knot forming at the base of his cock. The scent of peppermint mixed with his arousal overwhelmed her senses, and she drank it in like it would kill her if she didn’t.

‘Your mine,’ he growled into her ear as he shoved his knot inside of her, finally releasing his own orgasm. She grinded her hips against it, forcing the most desperate noise from him. It was too much, the sounds he made, the feeling of him swollen inside her, the smell of peppermint overwhelming her senses, she snapped again. She dug her fingernails into his back as he spilled the last of himself inside of her, she kept moving her hips in quick shallow movements extending the pleasure for both of them. Before she could understand what was happening, the bed fell out from underneath her, and suddenly she was plunged into darkness.

She doesn’t know where she is. She doesn’t care.

Hermione can feel the warm light surrounding her, enveloping her, protecting her from the darkness surrounding her. She feels content, warm but not hot. It’s a kind of contentment she can’t describe, like there’s nothing else she could possibly be doing, nothing else she could be responsible for. The white light will take care of everything for her.

The light breathes against her face, expanding and retracting in a slow lazy rhythm. She lifts her head from its resting place on something soft and comfortable and tries to look at the

light holding her, but it's too bright. She pulls backwards and squints her eyes, trying to make out the shape in front of her.

It smiles back at her. *He* smiles at her. She smiles and lets him lean into her, leaving a kiss on her forehead. She doesn't know how but he sets a flame alight on her head- not a burning flame, but a comforting one. The kind of fire that protects, nurtures, and feeds rather than destroys. It spreads across her face and down her shoulders, she can somehow even feel it travelling down the strands of hair flowing down her back. She closes her eyes but she can still feel the warmth against her eyelids, and it is intoxicating. She breathes in and she smells him, the familiar scent of him. She tries to say his name but it won't come to her. She frowns when she finds herself coming up short again, she should know what his name is. She knows him, he knows her, in a different way than they've ever known anyone.

The warmth in the light begins to flicker, and her heart begins to race. Why can't she remember him? She should know him! His light is flickering away, each time a little less bright. More and more the white fades to grey, and she doesn't understand. She takes a step back from him, and he reluctantly lets her go, his white eyebrows are together in a frown as she steps away.

When she's no longer touching him, she watches a single white tear fall from his greyed out eyes. But she can't stop her feet stepping farther away from him. He lifts his arm from his side and his grey eyes move to his forearm. A black tar seeps out from under his fingernails, and he falls to the ground.

Hermione tries to call out to him but she can't think of his name. She doesn't know what to call, what to say. She tries to step back toward him but her feet keep taking another step behind her each time. She can feel the light drained from her body, the only sensation she can feel is the cold damp water seeping from her own eyes. She hadn't realised she had even been crying.

The tar crept up his fingers and started to taint the light on his arm, growing like a disease down his palm and onto his wrist. He stared down at the black corruption in horror as it advanced to his forearm. His eyes shot to her, and the only word to describe the look in his eyes was terror.

His eyes stayed on her for just a second, before he shut them tight, and doubled his body over in agony. She couldn't hear his pain, but she could see his mouth slammed shut, his teeth ground so hard together that the veins in his neck rose to the surface, trying to burst through his very skin. He managed to look up at her once again, the tar had crept almost to his elbow and stopped. His eyes told her he was in excruciating pain but he couldn't scream, he didn't dare scream.

He cradled his arm to his chest as he stood, his eyes hardening in a painful sadness now. Like somehow hope was lost. He slowly stretched his arm out to her as the tar receded. She tried to lean forward to see what he was trying to show her, she was so far away from him now she could barely make out the round shape appearing at the edge of the receding tar.

'No,' she whispered into the emptiness. It followed her around as it echoed getting louder with each cycle until it was her own voice slamming against her head in the gusts of wind

assaulting her ears.

The tar unnaturally quickened its pace, releasing its grip on his arm and retreating back down into his fingernails. Suddenly, she was moving closer to him. Her body was petrified still as she flew through the air towards him. She couldn't take her eyes off the symbol imprinted on his arm, until it covered her entire vision like it was burned into her irises.

When she woke she found the room devoid of air. She sucked it into her lungs desperately but it never seemed to satisfy the animal inside her screaming that she was dying. Her eyes were so blurred she couldn't see the room in front of her.

She felt a strong hand on her back trying to soothe her. She could have sworn she heard someone talking to her. A man, somewhere under water.

A man. An alpha.

She blinked hard and tears fell from her eyes clearing her vision. She immediately jumped out of the bed away from him, grabbing her dressing gown from the floor and wrapping it around herself.

'What's wrong are you alright?' his voice was filled with concerned panic, and it broke her heart but she needed to know.

'Let me see your arm!'

The man looked like she had slapped him, just for a moment, before he hid it behind a practised neutral expression. He pulled out his arms and all she saw was pale unblemished skin. She wanted to be relieved but she was haunted by the expression he wore on his face. She looked down to her own forearm and rubbed her fingers across it, feeling the raised flesh under the charm.

She looked at his arm a little longer, and saw the familiar sheen of magic layer across it, invisible if you don't know what you're looking for.

'Take off the charm,' she said, her voice barely came out more than a croak.

He sighed, and he had that same expression of hopelessness from her dream as he lifted his wand and removed the charm from his arm. Underneath it she saw what she feared most. Her heart lodged into her throat, or maybe it was bile she wasn't sure.

'So that's what you really are,' she said, almost in a whisper.

'I had no choice,' he said softly, 'This was inflicted on me,' the alpha started to vibrate through his voice as his anger and frustration grew, 'I don't want it.'

'That's what they all say after the war!' she shouted back at him, suddenly filled with rage and disgust at herself. She pulled her dressing gown arm back and dispelled her charm

showing the word 'Mudblood' written in crude lettering along her forearm, 'THIS is what inflicted looks like!'

'I...I think I've seen that before,' suddenly he gripped his head, shoving his hands through his hair as he fell off the side of the bed. He sobbed into the floor, 'Why the *fuck* does my head hurt so much!' and she knew she couldn't leave him to whatever was happening to him.

She glanced at the door behind her, wondering if she should get someone to help him. She turned to approach the door, wondering what way she would go, who she would speak to or how she would even begin to explain this to them.

'I just stood there,' he cried, and she stopped dead. She slowly turned around to look at him, he was staring at the floor on his hands and knees, 'she did that to you and I just watched it.'

A sharp pain shot through her skull, it was as if a piece of her brain had been electrocuted back to life. She didn't remember falling to the floor, but she couldn't burn the images she saw next out of her head.

She remembered lying on the floor, the pain so bad her vision would cut out, and him standing there. Everything about him was grey rather than white, as though his soul was dying inside of him as he watched helplessly. Her vision shifted between floorboards and his face. Bellatrix's manic laughter piercing through her mind. A phantom of searing pain shot up her arm, and it was like she was back there, under his mad aunt, desperate for something, anything to end the pain.

'Draco,' she managed to cry, and the flashes in her vision returned to the steady floorboards, and she was back to reality. She looked up to see him sitting on the bed cradling his head in his hands refusing to look at her.

She didn't have any words to say. She couldn't reconcile the nasty prejudiced ferret with the man she had spent the last few days with. As she looked at him she could feel the fog lift from her brain, and suddenly her memories weren't of her mysterious alpha, but him. The pieces in her head connected together and suddenly it was Draco Malfoy in between her thighs, Draco Malfoy holding her until she fell asleep, Draco Malfoy making her feel for once like her designation wasn't a burden. But somehow it felt like it was a ghost of him, like someone else had taken possession of his body, or like she had taken possession of someone else's. It wasn't right that they could fit like that together. They were mortal enemies since they were eleven.

None of it made any sense to her, and the more she thought about it the more her brain struggled with the conflicting memories. She could feel her heart racing as the oxygen in the room seemed to evaporate. Her eyes immediately found the only exit in the room, and the animal in her made the decision for her.

For the first time in her life, Hermione Granger simply ran away, ignoring the screams of her omega telling her to go back to him.

Chapter End Notes

WELL I'M DYING TO KNOW YOUR OPINIONS- PLEASE PLEASE LEAVE THEM FOR ME TO READ!

As promised, another chapter- and a huge one at that. I hope you enjoyed this chapter, even though it's pretty shattering at the end! (I'm sorry)

As usual, thank you so much for reading- I appreciate each and every one of you and look forward to seeing you in the comments or in the next update!! :D

Lots of Love,

Comfort

XXX

Chapter 6: Peppermint Roses

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Of all the witches in the world...it had to be her. The one woman he could never have. Every memory he had of the omega was being corrupted by her. It was like his memories were collected in a colouring book, and every scene was slowly coming alive into colour, painting the Omega's face into Hermione Granger's. The brown in her eyes darkening with the intelligence of her identity.

You're letting her go! Don't let my omega go!

Draco shut his eyes tighter against the assault his alpha was inflicting on his brain. He could almost feel it swelling inside his mind, pushing up against the confines of his skull, as if it could burst from him and chase her down the hall itself. It took everything in him not to run after her. The muscles in his legs ached with the pressure of fighting two different instructions at once.

He pulled his head from his hands and stared at the room, finding it too painful to remain there. He stood and began to aggressively dress himself, pulling his shirt sharp around his neck, uncaring that he nearly strangled himself when he buttoned it.

He tried to avoid reminders of her but they were everywhere; the table they'd ate at, the bed they'd lay in, the door he'd smashed on his way to her. Even the air was contaminated with her, not just her scent, but both of them. The smell of strawberries, peppermint, roses, cedarwood, and some bastardised version of the four assaulted him with each breath.

He tugged his coat over his suit jacket, reaching into the pocket to grab his cheque book. He leaned against their little table and quickly wrote a cheque that would more than cover the damage he had done to the door. He shoved it back into his pocket and strode to the door.

He had intended not to look back, but just before he closed it behind him he studied the room once more. This was the first place since the war where he wasn't disgraced ex-death eater Draco Malfoy. He was no one, and she was no one. But now he was no one, and she was one of the most important someones in Wizarding Britain.

He spotted her discarded tank top draped over an armchair at the front of the room. He tried to get himself to walk away from it, turning his body away and pulling the door closer towards him, using it to block the piece of her from his sight. He scowled out into the empty corridor, staring at some hideous plant at the end of the hallway. He tried to move forward but his feet stood still on the floor. He closed his eyes for a moment, and slowly turned back around, creaking the door open just enough to see the innocent top calling out to him like a beacon. It was the one she'd worn on the first day.

He reached out with his gloved hand and lifted the tiny garment. He knew he shouldn't but he brought it to his nose and closed his eyes, inhaling the scent of her. His alpha seemed to

still inside him when it was reassured of her. Draco tried to reconcile in his head that smelling like her meant smelling like Granger, and it wasn't a reality he was ready to accept yet.

If he was honest, he didn't want to accept it. It would be better for him to put this whole incident down into a box in the back of his mind. Let it grow old and dusty in the back of his mind until he wasn't sure if it was real or not. Maybe he should ask Blaise to obliviate him. Because why would she, Golden Girl and Gryffindor Princess, ever want him?

He sunk his face farther into the top, and suddenly it was like he was back there with her, feeling her smile against his neck, her breath in his ear, her thighs quivering around his shoulders, her laugh underneath his lips when he tickled her with his kisses down her belly. There was no doubt about it, she had wanted him until she knew he was Draco fucking Malfoy.

His eyes shot open, and the dangerous flare of hope erupted in his chest. She did want him- at least her omega did. She had already chosen his alpha, now all he needed to do was convince her to choose him, the man. His alpha thumped his heart to life in his chest, and for once they were unified in feeling. He didn't fight his instincts, he shoved the top into the deep pockets of his coat and shut the door behind him. No, he wouldn't have that mystery girl back again, but he was hoping, against all logic, for something better.

He started down the corridor and smiled to himself. He didn't care what it took he had to try.

He had made her a promise to hunt her down after all, but Hermione Granger was no usual prey.

'Hermione you're going to have to deal with him sometime,' Harry's voice broke through the fortress she had made in her bed.

'Why?' she replied, sounding somewhat adolescent inside her pillow queendom.

'Well to stop this for a start,' Harry said under his breath.

She popped her head out from the covers and saw Harry standing looking ridiculous with an enormous bouquet of roses. She let her head fall back onto the pillows lazily and sighed.

Into her sideways view of the world, she saw him set the bouquet on her bedside table.

She frowned across at it, 'are those strawberries?'

'Yes, chocolate covered. Apparently they smell like you,' he shrugged.

She shot her head up and frowned at him, 'Harry Potter you haven't been reading the cards have you?'

He held his hands up in surrender, 'It was Ginny I swear! She wants to know if he did something to hurt you,' he sat on the bed beside where she lay, suddenly seeming very

serious ‘he didn’t did he, Hermione? You know you can tell us.’

‘No, of course not!’ she blurted as she extracted herself from her duvet and sat upright against her headboard, ‘He wouldn’t have...’ she said as she pulled her knees to her chest.

‘Then why are you avoiding him, Hermione?’ he side-eyed the flowers beside her bed, ‘he certainly seems very taken with you,’ he said in that almost mocking way only Harry could pull off.

‘That’s not the point, Harry. It’s who he is,’ she wrapped her arms around her legs, fiddling with the hands holding them, ‘we can’t be together.’

‘Blimey Hermione, who could it be that’s really that bad?’ Hermione simply fixed him with a hard stare, reluctant to tell him she had gone through her heat with the man that tortured them all for seven years, and joined the Death Eaters.

‘It’s not McLaggen is it?’ he cringed, before he let the expression fall from his face, ‘But if it is that would be fine,’ he quickly corrected in a panic, ‘I could get used to him...not that my opinion really matters. Oh you know what I mean!’

He corrected himself lamely, but it made her laugh nonetheless, ‘It’s not McLaggen.’ She raised her eyebrows at him playfully, ‘worse!’

‘Well,’ Harry slapped his knees as he stood up from the bed, ‘I’ll go get my wand,’ he said, raising his eyebrows so high his glasses threatened to slide down his nose. Hermione simply watched him as he strolled towards the door casually, ‘Clearly Voldemort is back again if it’s so bad you won’t even tell me.’

Hermione just laughed and shook her head at him, there was something about Harry, he was always able to pull her out of even her darkest slums. He opened the door and made to leave, only turning at the last minute to say, ‘I’m just saying, maybe you should give the poor bloke a chance.’

‘Harry Potter that is not your place to say!’ she shouted even though she was smiling at him. She threw a pillow at him and he slammed the door shut before it could reach him. Once the immediate threat was over he cracked open the door a little, ‘you missed,’ he said quietly through the gap.

‘Harry!’ she shouted through her laugh. He shut the door again and was gone- leaving her to think about what he had said. She looked to the bouquet by her bed, the deepest red roses sat in full bloom, complete with an expensive statis charm to protect them. In between the roses were perfect chocolate strawberries. She reached out and picked one off its wooden stem and slipped it into her mouth.

While she let some of the chocolate melt, she lifted the card attached to the vase and stared at her own name in beautiful gold script. She turned it over and dared herself to read his words as she sank her teeth into the sweet flesh of the fruit.

Hermione,

These flowers smelled a little like you, no comparison to reality, but close.

I'm sorry I'm not who you thought I would be, but I promise I am the man you met in there, not the one you think you know.

Give me a chance to prove it,

Your Alpha.

The omega in her forced her to bite her lip even at the mention of her Alpha, purring at the idea of being owned by him. There was something about his words brought her back to his submission to her, it just seemed so at odds with the Malfoy she remembered. The memory immediately brought her back to that moment, and she would swear she could feel the ghost of his tongue swipe across her inner thigh. She ripped the duvet from her body as surely as she ripped the memory from her imagination. She simply ignored the heat that had built between her legs and ignored the omega's pleas. It was simply too embarrassing to think about how she'd moaned and writhed against his touch.

She walked into the landing and lifted a fresh towel from the cupboard. She couldn't hide here forever, she would have to face the Ministry today. Another day off work wasn't going to change the fact that she'd slept with Draco Malfoy for four days straight and now she didn't know how to face him. Hopefully, if she just stuck to her office she wouldn't be in contact much with him anyway. She headed towards the bathroom she shared with Harry and Ginny as her omega cursed her for leaving the bed.

She'd thought about his flowers that day more than she liked to admit. None of it made sense in her head, after the war he pretty much became a recluse, breaking off his engagement to the young Greengrass girl and disappearing into his families' companies. Hiding in the shadows was never Draco Malfoy's strong suit, but she'd assumed he was simply embarrassed to appear in public after everything, not that he had become a completely different person. She chewed the edge of her pen in her mouth as she thought, it just didn't fit. Going by what she had read about them hiding from embarrassment simply wasn't in an alpha's nature, but she supposed he seemed quite different to what she had read. If she thought about it nothing about the omega descriptions fit her either, physically of course she was small like an omega, took her heats like an omega, but nothing about Hermione Granger in everyday life was submissive.

It was as she twirled in her seat, staring at the well-read books in her office that it hit her. She jolted upright in her seat, as the shockwave rippled through her office. She looked down to the papers on her desk, half expecting them to float past her head. She tried to move but found her movements slow and laboured like she was underwater. She dared to take a breath and it was all him. The peppermint settled into the back of her ears and she closed her eyes as she drank it in. There was a weird buzzing noise in her ear, she frowned as she tried to make out what it meant, what it was saying.

‘Alpha,’ her omega chanted.

She opened her eyes and turned her head in a slow laboured fashion against the strength of the invisible water, and it was as if it suddenly drained when her eyes landed on the door of her office. Her weight settled back into her chair and she had to force her eyelids together a few times as if she had just woken from a sleep.

She looked back to the door and she couldn’t explain it. She stood from the chair almost without her permission and began walking towards the door. If you asked her later, she would tell you it was as if she was watching herself from the back of her mind, watching her hand reach out for the door, watching her feet step one foot in front of the other down the corridor. She couldn’t even tell you why she got in the lift, she just did. And when the lift doors slid closed she watched and wondered where she was going.

When the lift doors opened peppermint invaded the small space like fog, clouding her mind and confusing her senses. When Draco Malfoy stepped through the mist it was like it loosened its grip on her mind and hit her square between her legs. She hated that she reacted to him like this, he hadn’t said a word and her heart was pulsing in her chest to be near him.

His head was pointed down, but his grey eyes locked with hers through his dark eyelashes. And he had the audacity to smirk as he stepped into the lift and stood beside her. They stood facing the doors, watching as the metal closed to seal them in together.

‘Granger,’ he said, voice distorted by a growl that seemed to ripple the air around her.

She clenched her teeth as the force of his voice seemed to caress around the cheek closest to him, trailing down her jaw in smooth ripples that left her breath short when it reached her gland.

‘What are you doing here, Malfoy?’ she returned, she tried to keep the arousal out of her voice, and only managed to sound irritated, it would have to do.

‘I have a meeting with the Minister. Surely as his assistant, you ought to know that?’

Another wave of his alpha pheromones hit her, and she hid the compulsory tilt of her neck as a simple shake of her hair from her face.

‘I’m not his assistant,’ she smoothed her clammy hands down her sleek skirt, ‘Tell me why you’re really here, Malfoy.’

‘I’m here to see the Minister,’ he repeated.

‘You’re here to see me,’ she blurted, regretting it almost immediately.

He huffed out a laugh, ‘Tell me, Granger. Where were you going in this lift before I got in?’

She tried to come up with an answer quickly but she never was that good at coming up with an excuse on the spot, and it didn’t help that her gland had taken over her pulse in her neck, beating in time with her rapid heart.

‘I thought so,’ he drawled, not bothering to hide the delight in his voice as he turned his body towards her and leaned against the elevator wall confidently, ‘you came to me.’

She stared at the metal doors in front of her, it was almost more than she could bear, everything about him screamed alpha, much like the low omega’s chant in the back of her head. It felt like she had hundreds of omegas, all pushing her forward into the smirking man in front of her.

The lift of his eyebrow was all she needed to cement the innuendo he’d intended, and her knees nearly fell from underneath her. She started to wonder if he could smell what he was doing to her.

‘There’s no point trying to hide it,’ he said as he pushed himself off the wall and circled behind her. She stared forward and tensed her muscles to stop herself from throwing herself at him. Her best bet was to stay absolutely still, even if she could feel his looming presence behind her.

The alpha pheromones were nearly impossible to stifle as she felt him lean closer to her neck. The hairs stood up as she felt the light ghost of his breath against her hair. Suddenly she felt angry that he felt he could move that close to her and she loosened her grip on her own scent, letting the roses occupy the space between the peppermint fog. She realised it was a mistake when she felt him suck in the air around her, taking her roses into himself like it was his last breath.

He made a low rumbling noise inside his chest and it seemed to reverberate through her body. He might as well have teased her with a fleeting touch of a vibrator against her clit the way she sucked the air into her lungs with him, inhaling the combined smell of peppermint roses into her bloodstream.

‘Draco,’ she tried to warn but it sounded more like lust.

‘One word,’ he swallowed, ‘One word and I leave you alone forever. Tell me you don’t want this,’ groaned against her shoulder, nudging her curls with his nose.

She opened her mouth to speak, but she knew anything she said would be a lie. At that moment it took everything in her not to step back into him, to let his arms possessively grab her as she exposed her gland to him. But she knew she wasn’t in her right mind, she might not be able to answer the same when he’s not there.

So she stayed silent, and that in itself was an answer, she didn’t not want it.

The doors ripped apart in front of her and she remembered exactly where she was. She felt rather than saw him step back from his position. Her omega immediately felt the loss and whined in her ears. Their pheromones leaked into the corridor of her office, and the sudden embarrassment of what had happened forced her into movement. Eager to remove herself from the scene, she began down the corridor at a gruelling pace considering her heels were particularly higher than usual. (Perhaps a conscious decision now that she thought about it.)

She felt his presence behind her, quiet and powerful. Like a predator that could kill her in seconds, choosing to free her. She closed her eyes as she opened the door to her office, leaving it open to the man behind her.

‘Ah, Mister Malfoy!’ Shacklebolt greeted enthusiastically, ‘I see Hermione has escorted you. Wonderful.’

Draco sent an imposing amount of his pheromones into the air when Shacklebolt used her first name. Kingsley was a beta, and wouldn’t know that he had shrunk a little because of Draco’s possessive display, ‘Come on in,’ he said a little quieter, letting Draco take the lead into his office. Malfoy took one last heated glance in her direction before he crossed the threshold of her boss’ door before he was gone.

Hermione had to cross her legs when she sat back in her chair. The way he had even the Minister of Magic back down to him was...enthraling. His jealous display doing more for her than she ever thought it could- usually she despised jealousy, but it looked good on him.

Because you’re HIS omega.

She shook herself, taking a deep breath and picking up her pen. She took a piece of parchment and laid it out on her desk, confident that while her alpha was just a room away, she would get nothing done. But she had to try, if only to stop herself from bursting in.

Chapter End Notes

Well I couldn't have you waiting too long after the excitement of last chapter, could I? ♥

Please let me know what you thought of this chapter!- how did you think it was going to go? Are you happy with where it is going?

Big huge thank you to everyone following along- I appreciate every single one of you.



Special thanks to my new friend DirtyMudblood! Who is just amazing and has really helped shape where this fic is going. SO much love for her. If you like this story you will definitely love hers!! It's called CherryMint and I really cannot recommend it enough. She is an amazing human being, she's even made a GORGEOUS visual for this story that I will be putting on as soon as I figure out how!

I hope you enjoy this chapter,

Lots of Love,
Comfort ♥

Chapter 7: Dreams of Cedarwood

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

The first thing Hermione feels is the tender heat against her closed eyelids. She smiles into the light of the sun casting the dark world behind her eyelids a soft orange. Underneath her body, a silky texture rubs along her skin like gentle waves lapping at the bottom of a still boat.

She runs her hands along her bare stomach and smiles. She's in the same outfit she went to sleep in, a simple top just brushing the top of her stomach and a pair of small shorts to combat the heat of the night. The weather had been unusually warm for this time of year.

The light threatening to seep through her eyelids told her it must be morning. She opens her eyes and sits up, expecting to find herself looking back at the rays shining through her bedroom window. Instead, she sees a sea of golden silk moving rhythmically around her for miles. She squints, trying to see where the clementine sky meets the glossy waves past the rays of the sun reaching for her. Just before the vast and powerful sun, a little black freckle weaves in and out of view as the silky water heaved.

She shakily rises to her feet, enjoying the feel of the silk against her calves even as she tries to stay upright amongst the weaving material. She lifts her hands to her eyes to block out the strongest of the light and tries to look towards its source. She strains her eyes, trying to focus her sight on the small shadow before the sun. Her legs begin to shake under the pressure of the waves, and she stretches her arms out, trying to balance against the unrelenting floor. She takes her eyes off the sun, instead looking down at her bare feet struggling for stability on the moving floor.

She looks up in time to see the material swell up into the sky in the distance ahead of her. It rises until only a slither of light escapes over the top of the silk wall. Her eyes follow it as it descends closer to her, the heat from the sun evaporating over her body piece by piece leaving her in the shadows. She bends her knees and sets her feet farther apart, steadying herself for the golden wave.

The silk pulls out from under her feet, sucked in by the wave threatening to spill over her head. Instinctively she gasps for air as gravity falls out from underneath her. She should be frightened, her heart should race, her eyes should widen in shock, but instead she stares up at the impending golden sheet as her back lands against something surprisingly soft and flexible. She holds her hands over her face and closes her eyes, waiting for the gentle weight of the sheet to brush against her arms.

When she feels the silk against her arms she opens her eyes, and pushes her hand out into the sheet, watching her fingers dip into the gold. She smiles as she remembers being in this position before, hiding from her mother in bed in the hopes of spending more of the warm morning within its sheets. The thought allows her to relax into the mattress below her and to simply enjoy the silken sheets caressing along her bare legs.

Her body completely stills when she feels a hand wrap around the front of her foot. Her heart races with the shock, and she's tempted to yank her foot away, but the hand gives a soft gentle squeeze of reassurance before sliding up the front of her calf. A familiar minty smell seeps through the sheets, accompanied by a spicy wood scent. She's not sure why, but it calms her. When another hand slides up the back of her other calf she opens her eyes and smiles into the gold.

Soft lips press against her stomach, and a gentle laugh escapes her at the ticklish sensation. She reaches down and plants her hand into hair almost as soft as the silken sheets against her skin. The hands move up her thighs to her waist, her own hand slipping down the back of the man's head and onto his shoulder as he reaches her chest, laying soft gentle kisses in his wake as he makes his way up to her face.

The last thing she sees is a flash of white hair before she closes her eyes. Somehow she knows that if she sees him he will disappear into the golden sheets. Instead of fading away, he lays a little of his weight onto her. The heat radiating from his chest reminds her that he's here and he's real. She lies silent and breathes against his chest, her lack of vision only amplifying the feel of him against her; the brush of hair against her shin, the pressure of his thighs inside of hers, the ridges of his hand cupping her ribcage.

Anticipation builds in the moment where she waits, she simply breathes and focuses on the areas that his warm body is pressed against her. With her breath, she takes the smell of him deeper into her lungs. It sends the strangest feeling across her, as if something buried in the back of her mind is purring. She chases the scent until her nose brushes against soft skin. She realises it's his neck when the spicy wood smell intensifies sending a slow heat down her body. His hair brushes against her face, and then she feels his breath against the pulse hammering in her neck. She stretches her face away from him and gives him greater access to her neck. She does not mean it as an invitation, it is a plea.

His hand slips underneath her back, pulling her chest higher off the bed towards him. He grips her tight to his chest and sinks his face into her exposed neck. He sucks her scent into him like he's been starved of clean air. He blows the warm air back out into her neck, and her spine tingles at once warning her of her vulnerability and revelling in giving it away. Her hand squeezes tighter into his shoulder when his hand at her back pulls her even tighter into him. He attacks her on two fronts, kissing her gland from above while his hand forces her chest tight to his from below. She bends her body into his possessive touch. The way the tip of his fingers were digging into her back made her feel like she's a precious thing, something to be savoured, consumed. He holds her as if it takes every ounce of his self-control not to completely devour her, and the pulse between her legs only grows stronger with each possessive press of his lips against her.

Her mouth contorts in a sinful smile, she feels all at once like the possession and the owner. When his tongue sweeps out over the sensitive spot in her neck she gasps and wraps her legs around him. She tries to pull his hips closer to her, even as his entire body is already pressed hard against her. They both can't seem to get each other close enough.

He growls into her neck and leans back onto his knees, the hand tight to her back carrying her with him. She gasps when she's pulled upright, the sudden movement opening her eyes. His

white hair focuses at the bottom of her vision while his lips trail up her neck as her body settles into his lap. Her chest slides down painfully slowly against his, warm skin held hard against hers. His arms are strong around her, holding her to him like he's afraid she's going to pull away. She doesn't, she sighs when his kisses reach up under her jaw and loses her hand in his hair.

Her slow descent ends, and her hips land in his lap. She grips tighter onto his shoulder when his excitement presses against hers. Her resolve breaks at the feel of him hard under her. She pulls her head back just by a fraction, and her brown eyes connect with his silver. Draco Malfoy. He doesn't give her time to think about it, he bucks up into her and presses his arousal hard against her slit.

Her mouth opens in a breathy surprised moan, as she lets her forehead fall against his. When he follows by using his hands at her waist to pull her even harder down against him she gasps... And it sounds exactly like a breathy, 'Draco.'

The hand in his hair pulls his face closer to her as she smashes her lips against his. He moans into her mouth and it sends another sweep of arousal across her stomach down to between her legs. Something in the back of her mind protests, she shouldn't be doing this with him. But instead, she grinds her hips against his thrusts as he pushes his tongue into her mouth. She moans at the contact and her nails dig into the flesh on his back. There are only thin pieces of fabric between them, and they might as well not be there with how hard he presses against her clit.

Each sweep of his tongue against hers makes it more and more difficult to pull herself away, so she doesn't. When he pulls his head back and begins kissing down her throat again she lifts her head for him, exposing her vulnerable neck to him.

He brushes his teeth against her gland, and she can't help but roll her hips faster over him. He responds with an even harsher brush of his teeth against her and a desperate plea of , 'alpha,' escapes her lips.

'Mine' he rasps against her neck before he sinks his teeth into her gland...and she let him.

Hermione woke up with a start, bolting upright in the bed. A quick examination of her surroundings told her she was just in her bedroom. She stared around confused and dazed as she tried to get used to her surroundings. Her eyes sprung open when she remembered and she frantically rubbed her hand up and down her neck. She closed her eyes in relief, it was just another dream. She was still unclaimed. She pushed the hand at her neck up into her face, brushing the bushy curls on her forehead out of her eyes.

Her breathing relaxed, but she didn't feel much relief. This was becoming a constant curse. Every night she dreamt of him, and she wasn't sure if it was because he occupied a large part of her consciousness during the waking hours or if this was typical for an omega after spending her heat with an alpha.

She checked the time on the clock by her bedside. She still had about an hour before she was due to get up for work, but she knew after that dream there was no way she was getting back to sleep. The pressure between her legs hadn't lightened up, she was just as needy and desperate as she had been in his arms. She looked at the handle at her bedside table's top drawer and eyed it guiltily.

It wouldn't be right, how could she face him again after it. She can't really face him now anyway. She'd hidden from him after his meeting with Shacklebolt.

It might make her reaction to him worse when she does see him. Could it get much worse than it already is?

He wouldn't ever know, so what harm would it do.

She sighed as she finally convinced herself. She reached into the top drawer and felt around blindly, scared that if she saw it she would back out. She needed it too much to back out. When she touched velvet, and wrapped her hand around the familiar shape. She pulled the pouch out of her bedside table and slammed the drawer shut.

She lay the bag on her chest under the covers and felt around for the opening, 'No going back now,' she said low to herself as she reached into the bag.

When Draco Malfoy woke up he did it with a smile on his face. Her resolve must be weakening if she looked at him last night, saw him for who he was and kissed him anyway. She was beginning to allow herself to have what she wants, even if it was just in her dreams.

She was beautiful in that world she had conjured up last night, the reflection of the golden sheets reflecting off her tan skin, how she smiled in complete bliss as he crawled up her body. He pulled himself upright in his bed, yawning and stretching out his arms. He let them flop down beside him on his duvet, and it pulled the sheets tight to his hardened cock. The sensation was pleasant, but not enough to spark a strong reaction. He smirked as if he had only just realised it was there, and slipped his hands under the covers. He trailed his hand across his stomach, slipped his fingers underneath the waistband of his underwear. Just as his hand started to breach the small dusting of hair on his pubic bone...

The door burst open, 'Are you ever going to get up? We were expecting you for breakfast fifteen minutes ago.'

Draco closed his eyes and let his head fall back against his headboard in defeat.

'For the last time Blaise,' Pansy Parkinson strutted in behind him, her little heels clipping against the floorboards.

Draco mustered what strength he had to roll his head forward again, his hand slipping out of his underwear, knowing full well any chance of him relieving himself had just walked out when she walked in.

She didn't sit down as much as she threw herself down onto one of the armchairs in the middle of Draco's room, 'it's not breakfast, it's *brunch*.' She crossed one leg over the other, and lifted her skirt to hide the ridiculous amount of leg she showed through the slit, 'It's very popular in America.'

Blaise rolled his eyes at her behind her back which at least put a smile on Draco's face, 'Well either way,' he pushed past the chair Pansy sat in and tugged at the covers at the bottom of his bed, 'Draco, you're late.'

Blaise was lucky the weather was nice lately. If the air against his chest had been cold he would have hexed the man. He was also lucky that the duvet had chosen to land at the waistband of his underwear and no further.

Draco hesitated, tilted his head downwards and stared at Blaise through his lashes. Blaise turned his back on him and started walking away, 'Seems you'd rather lay in bed than spend time with your friends.' His voice sounded like it was hurt, but Draco knew him enough to hear the teasing lilt of his voice.

He took the opportunity when all eyes were on Blaise to lift the duvet covers off his lap and spin his legs out of the bed. He put his feet onto the hard wooden floor and walked to the bathroom.

'Draco!' Pansy's shriek cut through his ears and he knew he'd been spotted. Before his alpha developed he probably would have shied away from embarrassment at being caught tenting his underwear but now he just lifted his lips into a smirk and held his hands up in a shrug as he walked, 'I was having a nice dream.'

He didn't bother to wait for their response. He shook his head as he walked into the bathroom.

'Was it about her?' He didn't answer, he just turned on the tap splashed his face with water and watched the droplets run past his smile.

'Ooooh, who's her?! Is that the omega witch you were talking about?' Pansy's voice seemed to raise an octave when she sniffed out gossip with her cute little upturned nose.

Blaise appeared in the doorway, unconcerned about breaking Draco's privacy, 'When are you going to tell us who she is?'

Draco straightened his back, and let the water drop down onto his chest from his chin, 'Blaise,' he warned through his smile, 'I told you I can't tell you.' He held his hands up in front of him in surrender, 'Program's rules.'

He walked over to his shower and leaned in to turn the water on, giving the water a chance to heat.

Blaise scoffed, leaning against his doorway, 'Since when has Draco Malfoy cared about the rules.'

Draco smiles, almost to himself, as he folds his arms across his chest. He raises one eyebrow at Blaise, 'A gentleman never tells.' He almost enjoys keeping this secret from his friends. At least then he wouldn't have to listen to how he's being ridiculous thinking that Hermione Granger will suddenly fall to her knees for him. At the thought of her on her knees, arousal begins to stir in his stomach. Images of her soaking wet from the shower while she takes his cock into his mouth flashes through his mind and he has to chastise himself before he gets a boner right in front of Blaise. The man would never let him forget it.

He lifts his towel from his radiator and holds it over his belly, 'Gentlemen don't watch their mates shower either.' Blaise huffs out a laugh and winks at him as if he can see into his mind. He spins on his heel and disappears from the room, 'Ten minutes, Malfoy.'

Chapter End Notes

I hope you enjoyed this new chapter! Please tell me what you think, you all know by now that I adore hearing from all of you (even if it's just an emoji- I love those too) All are the fuel that helps me get writing!

The next instalment will be available very soon- this chapter has actually been split in two because it was getting too long! (and I came up with a name for the next chapter I couldn't resist) Has anyone got any guesses as to what happens next? I'd love to see what you think!

Lots of Love,
Comfort ♥

Chapter 8: Peppermint Pastries

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Hermione took an embarrassingly short length of time to finish. It left her with too much time to spare, and too many thoughts rolling around her head to concentrate on anything. Ultimately it didn't solve anything either, as good as it felt to come she didn't actually find herself relieved of the want. So she forced herself into the shower, and decided to walk to work. It wasn't a bad decision. The weather really was rather lovely. A gentle wind swept through the gaps between the trees lining the footpath, while the sun painted the grey pavement with yellow dots where the light escaped through the leaves.

It was a rare thing in London to leave your home without an umbrella, she felt rather naked without it, as if she had forgotten her wand. But one look to the lone wispy cloud in the sky told her it was unlikely that the heavens would open up to pour down on her.

She approached a junction in the road. The traffic was getting heavier now she was closer to the hub of London and it meant she would regularly be interrupted by the various traffic lights before she could really walk any kind of distance. She tried to look on the bright side, it offered her the chance to look around her. She could watch the red buses pass her by in the traffic and enjoy the brief gust of wind they produced as they passed her. She could watch the man in the suit frantically check his watch while waiting at the traffic lights. Or she could smile and laugh to herself as the huge dog across the street pulled its tiny little owner reluctantly after it.

She looked around at the shops, pubs and cafes that ran up and down this street, covered in old architecture and flower baskets. They had a great deal of charm, and would almost fool you for being quaint little village shops but Hermione knew the area. This was where the rich liked to play with the idyllic memory of old England but behind that little bookshop front sat old English money. She couldn't deny it was beautiful though.

The building that caught her interest the most was one that looked slightly out of place. It wasn't so much English as it was French. The entire shopfront was painted white, with tall glass windows that held an elegant french script that read, 'Pâtisserie d'Angleterre' written in gold.

The owners of the bakery had placed an old cart at the front of the shop which was no longer used for bread. Instead, it was overflowing with flowers, violas, pansies, and marigolds all hugging tightly to each other, spilling over the cart with colour. Behind it, through the glass sat tarts, sat rows of little pastries, tarts and decorative breads much resembling the flowers on the outside of the shop. Various different colours and arrangements all designed to entice the viewer.

It was the colour that attracted her at first, as she took the first steps towards the bakery, in the complete opposite direction that she was supposed to go. She drifted down towards the shop like a little bee attracted by the colours, chasing the promise of nectar and pollen.

She came face to glass with the delicious tarts and stared at them through the window. She had plenty of time, and today was a beautiful day. What sealed the decision for her was the smell of mint wafting from the shop. She couldn't deny that she was curious how they could incorporate mint into a pastry.

She pulled the strap of her handbag off her shoulder and placed it in the crook of her elbow as she pushed open the white door. The inside of the shop was exactly how she had expected, a complete dichotomy to the outside. The front of the shop seemed modest compared to the interior. The small baking cart of flowers outside had been translated into an entire ceiling of flowers inside, broken up by the occasional industrial style chandelier. Neon signs lit up the leafy green wallpaper on the walls, and everywhere she looked were people in mustard faux french culotte trousers on green velvet seats. Overall the place just screamed 'too much', more Versailles than streets of Paris.

She wanted to crinkle her nose and squint her eyes at it, much like you would to block the light of the sun, as if to somehow shield her eyes from the decadence. But the fresh smell of mint wafted her to the front of the counter, where she was reunited with the rows of pastries. She could barely hear herself think as she pondered over the pastries. The bakery was really more of a cafe inside and thus far, it was overcrowded with noisy chatter and obnoxious laughter. She probably wouldn't have felt much more out of place in a Pureblood ballroom.

She leaned down closer to the counter as if the sounds in her ears were blocking her vision, and she squinted trying to read the elaborate script written in chalk marking each dessert. She gave up and went by sight, finally finding a row of red tarts decorated with the tip of a mint leaf. She smiled at herself satisfied, and straightened her back. She looked to the server whose smile hung by two invisible cords behind his cheeks, his eyes impatient.

Hermione was better than to get annoyed with him, she simply smiled back genuinely and pointed her finger towards the little red pastry behind the glass, 'I'll have the mint one there please.'

He looked up to the ceiling as though he thought himself too cool to be there, 'they come in boxes of two.'

'Two then,' she replied simply as she walked towards the till to pay. She opened up her handbag on her elbow and began to fish for her purse. As she shoved a pile of books out of the way she cursed the fact that she felt the need to carry so much stuff around with her.

'Granger?'

She stopped fustling in her bag the second she heard his voice. The vibration of the sound seemed to rumble through her muscles stopping the signals from her brain reaching them. It all made sense suddenly, it wasn't the pastries she smelled when she stood outside, it was him.

Draco couldn't believe his luck when she walked into the cafe door. This was the last kind of place he expected to see her, she wasn't the type to be impressed by all of this showy fashionable nonsense that Pansy and Blaise were suckers for. He watched her mesmerised as she leaned down closer to the counter. She tucked a mass of brown curls behind her shoulder as she frowned at the pastries, and the smell of her smacked him. His eyes went blurry as he was sucked down under with her scent. He had assumed the kitchen was making really strong strawberry tarts.

He closed his eyes as he forgot where he was. He let the sweetness of the strawberries wash over him. The tension in his shoulders relaxed and the restless alpha in the back of his head sighed, pleased to be near it's omega.

'Draco...Draco, are you even listening to me?' a whiney female voice broke through his concentration. He pushed his eyebrows together, as he tried to chase the scent. His alpha had lost its patience, it pulled at the nerves in the back of his neck forcing his shoulders to knot worse than before.

Find her

Something grabbed hold of his arm and his eyes flew open. The sudden touch prickled at the tension his alpha was already building. Before his eyes had even refocused in the light he growled at the intrusion aggressively. The blur dissipated, and he found himself facing Blaise who looked back at him incredulously.

'Bloody Merlin, mate. Hermione Granger? The mystery woman is Hermione Granger?'

Draco's anger subsided as he realised what he had done, he'd given himself away, and Granger with him. Another flare of anger bubbled in his chest at the thought of them being a threat to his omega. His alpha simmered at the sides of his brain, covering his mind in a red fog. He grabbed Blaise's hand on his arm and fixed the man with an aggressive stare his alpha provided, 'If you tell a soul I will...'

'Woow wow,' Blaise pulled his hand out from under his and pulled it closer to himself, 'You know we won't.'

Blaise's voice was sincere, and he reminded his alpha that his friend had never betrayed him before. His alpha retreated slightly, and Draco leaned back a little in his seat away from the man. He looked to Pansy, who was leaning as far back from him as she could manage. Her green eyes were wide open in fear, and her chest rose and fell rapidly. She was scared. Scared of him. The hackles raised at the back of his neck instantly settled, and his shoulders slumped.

'Pansy, I'm sorry...' he began.

She halted him with a flash of her rare genuine smiles that seemed too gentle for her to possess. 'Never mind *me* ,' her sincere smile had twisted into the mischievous grin she usually saved for him. Her foot jumped out under the table at him, and a small pierce of pain vibrated up his leg, 'go talk to *her* .'

He reflected her smile right back at her, and pushed himself up off his chair. He straightened his shirt and tucked his hands into his pockets as he approached her, walking coolly through the crowded room even as his heart pounded in his chest.

His eyes were fixed on her, fumbling through her handbag which she had no doubt overstuffed with an extension charm. Back in Hogwarts he would have rolled his eyes at her and been irritated by her need to lug every single thing around with her, but now she just looked cute. The freckles on her nose disappearing under the wrinkles as she frowned into her bag.

He took a moment and just watched her. He should have spent that moment thinking of something cool to say, but he hadn't. When it became clear he was staring at her too long, the most he could come up with was, 'Granger?'

Her entire body stilled, whatever she was searching for in her bag forgotten. He smiled, delighted at his ability to affect her. He put his hands into his pockets and waited for her body to catch up with her mind. She finally slowly turned around to look at him, blowing a wayward curl out from her face. Every time her brown eyes looked up at him it was like a punch in the chest, this time was no different, but he hid everything he felt behind his smug smile.

The eyebrows lifted in surprise suddenly came together in a frown, 'You.'

He sputtered out a laugh, the moment shattered, 'Well it's nice to see you too.'

Her mouth joined her eyebrows in her frown, and he wondered for a moment how she could be so accommodating to him in their shared dreams but face to face with him she was as cold as ever. Maybe she didn't know...but this was Granger. No doubt she had read even more exhaustively on the topic than he had. It was unthinkable he would know something she didn't. She was playing it cool.

She pulled her handbag closed and tucked the strap into her elbow, 'What do you want, Malfoy?' He used to hate her for being difficult, now it just spurred his alpha further. It reached out for her delighted by the prospect of the chase, she had given him every sign that despite her feet planted firmly on the ground in front of him, she was not immovable.

He raised his eyebrow at her, 'What now I can't even come over and say hello?'

'Well...you can't just...' She tripped up over her own words, and the smile on his face stretched even wider. He raised both of his eyebrows at her, indicating he was awaiting her response as he blinked at her. He was almost certain she was going to tell him to sod off when the server loudly cleared his throat.

She gave him one last narrow of her eyes as she turned from him, spurning him with a wisp of strawberry from her curls. His alpha begged him to step forward, to pull her against his chest and bury his head in her neck. He knew she would give in to him, even if only for a few moments before she pushed him away. She was distant and irritated with him by day, but at night her subconscious called out to him, melted into his embrace, fought with him and shared her passion with him.

‘That will be two Galleons,’ a deadpan voice came from the other side of the counter.

‘Galleons?’ He couldn’t see her face, but from the high pitched surprise in her voice she was either not expecting this cafe to be magical or how expensive this place was. The more he thought about it the less it made sense for her to be here. Everything about this place was at odds with who Granger was. It was pompous and unauthentic. A bunch of witches and wizards pretending to be not only Muggle, but French to boot.

‘Add it to my bill please.’

‘Of course, Sir,’ the man’s countenance changed the moment that Draco spoke, and that pissed him off royally. He obviously put more stock into Draco’s reputation than he did hers. Somehow this young man had come out of the other side of the war no better than he went into it.

He was glad the man wasn’t an alpha, because he was finding it increasingly difficult to control his pheromones the more he thought about it. The man turned away from Draco to write in his ledger, a little smaller than he had been before.

With his alpha satisfied the man had retreated from a war he didn’t even know was happening, his attention was squarely on Hermione who was back to facing him and in the middle of a rant.

‘I simply cannot accept...’

‘Granger,’ her mouth snapped shut at his interruption, but the look in her eyes scorned him for butting in. He cringed inwardly at her glare, but knew it was his best shot to get through her stubbornness, ‘we both know that you and I are difficult enough to have a full-scale argument about this,’ he lifted his hands out of his pockets and gestured around the room, ‘in front of all these people,’ her eyes shifted around the room past him, ‘but I urge you to accept this as what it is, a simple act of kindness.’ He put his hands back into his pocket and watched her chew her cheek in thought, ‘no strings.’

He didn’t know why it suddenly meant so much to him that she accept his offer. He supposed it meant she was softening to him, or maybe his alpha liked the idea of providing something for her, even if it was a small gesture. He waited on her answer with bated breath, but he disciplined his face to what he hoped was a simple curious look.

‘Fine,’ she finally gritted out as she lifted the little pink box from the counter. His alpha beamed with pride, and he could swear he felt his actual chest puff out.

‘What flavour did you go for then?’ He leaned forward and tried to peek into the little plastic window in the front of the box but she pulled it back from him. He looked up at her and realised how close he was to her. She didn’t pull back, she hadn’t pulled back in the first instance either. What was so bad about the contents of the little pink box that she would pull it away but she would stay near to him.

He found it increasingly difficult to think as he was held in the gravity of her pheromones. The alpha hummed pleasantly in his ears, just insistent enough to try and push him forward.

He imagined the same thing was happening to her, because her face lost its irritation, and she looked a lot more like the woman he had met in the program. Her bottom lip fell from her top, and he had the sudden urge to take another step closer to her and kiss her. But she didn't choose this, this was pheromones. If she was going to come to him, she would come to him as a witch not an omega.

The thought was just enough to encourage him to take a step back, gathering every ounce of self-control possessed to shove the alpha into the back of his mind. His move seemed to bring her back to the room as well. She broke eye contact with him and wrapped her hand over the top of the box, holding it to her stomach, 'They...they're strawberry.'

He smiled at her, even though she wouldn't see it staring down at the box in her hands, 'Of course they are.' He said quietly.

Her eyes finally met his again, and he was suddenly reminded of that moment in the dream when she looked at him like she really saw him. It only lasted a second before she tore the moment away from them, 'I have to go.'

She moved out of his reach and he stared down at the ground smiling. She was getting closer and closer to giving in.

'Malfoy,' his head shot up immediately at the sound of her voice. She looked back at him, and he could have almost laughed at the cliché of it, Hermione Granger standing looking at him in front of a backdrop of colourful flowers and sweets, 'thank you.' She smiled sweetly and turned away from him. He just stared at her back as she disappeared out of the door.

Why are you letting her walk away?!

He mentally kicked his alpha back, he didn't quite manage to hold his smile back as successfully as he walked back to his table. He barely dared to lift his eyes to see Blaise and Pansy. He knew their mocking grins would plastered all over their faces, but he was an alpha and alphas didn't walk with their heads down. He lifted his head and found much worse than just Blaise and Pansy staring at him. The entire café was clearly enthralled with what just happened. Most of the patrons ducked their heads the minute he looked up, betas. Some of them stared at him bashfully, others angrily, alphas. A few even stared at him hungrily, likely omegas. He took his seat next to Blaise and Pansy and avoided their eyes most of all. The noise slowly started to return to the room now the show was clearly over.

'Merlin's beard mate, I can barely breathe in here,' Blaise wafted his hand across his face and pretended to choke, 'all those pheromones.'

Pansy held her hand over her mouth trying to hide her chuckling but her breath and her shoulders gave her away.

'Very funny, Blaise. Just wait until you...'

'Hey mate, I'm an alpha too. I kinda get it, that's not going to stop me taking the...'

Pansy flapped her hand in front of Blaise, 'hold on hold on.' She put the flapping hand onto Draco's arm to get his attention before she pointed to the window. Through the haze of flowers he saw Hermione standing with her arms folded under the cafe's awning, staring out to the sudden shower of rain.

'You are one lucky bastard. What were the chances of rain today of all days?' Blaise's voice rumbled beside him but he didn't listen. He merely unhooked his umbrella from his seat, and didn't bother to hide his grin as he walked to Hermione standing out in the rain.

When he pushed through the door she was holding her hand out past the awning, feeling the rain tapping across her hand and frowning at it. He opened the umbrella and held it above her head.

She jolted at the sound of the umbrella and turned to look at him. Her look of surprise turned to immediate exasperation, but it didn't reach her smile.

'Can I walk you to the Ministry?'

'No.'

Well, that was that. He chuffed out a laugh at her. Hermione Granger was the most obstinate woman he knew. It made him all the more determined to win her over in the end, 'at least take the umbrella.'

She looked back out into the rain and didn't respond to him. She stood staring at the rain as if she could will it away with sheer thought.

'Granger, in case you haven't noticed my family isn't short of a Galleon or two, I can afford another umbrella. Take it, I'd rather see you dry.' He meant it, there was something about looking after her, even in small ways that made his chest swell.

He realised he may have come on a little strong when her head snapped back to him, her eyebrows pushing deep towards her hairline as if he had just declared undying love for her.

He smirked at her surprise, 'Your hair gets awfully frizzy in the rain.'

She pursed her lips to hide her smile, 'no strings?'

'No strings,' he held the umbrella closer to her, and she wrapped her little hand around it. Her little finger grazed his thumb for just a moment, and it was like an electric shock up his arm. He let go of the umbrella, and she wandered away from him for the second time today.

He smiled at her back walking away, the umbrella far too big and far too dark of a colour for her. He almost laughed at how at odds her trainers were to the rest of her skirt suit, but he didn't get the chance when he saw how tight her skirt was to her backside. He leaned against one of the railings and watched it sway as she moved farther away from him, never looking back at him.

Chapter End Notes

Thank you for reading! This chapter is slightly fluffier than the others- I'm dying to hear all your thoughts so please let me know what you think!

Do you think Hermione is finally going to give in? What do you think of Draco trying to win her over? Also, why was Hermione attracted to that cafe of all the ones there...?

I hope you are all safe and well,

Lots of love,

Comfort

xxx

Chapter 9: A Cedarwood Umbrella

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

The minute Hermione apparated into the alleyway she sucked a breath of fresh air into her lungs and let her shoulders finally relax. She hadn't stopped thinking about her encounter with Malfoy all day, and today was the last day she needed to be distracted. She had sat in meeting after meeting with Shacklebolt trying to keep her eyes focused on the almost constant flow of Wizengamot members in and out of his office. Every time she returned to her desk her eyes kept drifting to the innocent umbrella propped up against the drawers of her desk. It pulled her eyes to it like a magnet, while the notes she had prepared for the meetings ahead repelled her gaze away from them. It was something she wasn't used to dealing with, she had always prided herself on her ability to focus, even under tremendous pressure.

She'd come out of her trance when she felt Shacklebolt's eyes drifting to her, quickly shuffling through her notes and frowning at a page she picked at random. If you asked her if it was easier to concentrate in the meeting room away from the umbrella she would have had to seriously consider the question. The people in the meeting room sitting across from her moved in and out of focus. She constantly had to blink harder as if it could clear the abstraction in her vision caused by her mind.

She was just glad the day was almost over. In a last-minute decision, she apparated to the alley beside the Leaky Cauldron. After the day she had all she wanted to do was shut herself in her bedroom and read. She knew nothing she had at home would suffice, she had one topic she wanted to read about more than anything else. She had scoured the shelves for information on alphas and omegas before and had come up pretty much dry. She knew she was being ridiculous checking Flourish and Blotts again but she had to do something. She needed to know what these bloody ridiculous dreams were and how to stop them. Not to mention how to stop herself from becoming a teenage girl every time she saw Malfoy.

When the bricks shifted in front of her to reveal the alley she realised she had done it again, completely zoned out and auto-piloted to where she needed to be. She looked to the umbrella in her hand and almost jumped at the sight of it. She'd used it to open the alley without even thinking. She hooked the dark wooden handle over her elbow and was met with the sight of dozens of umbrellas. The crowded alley was littered with them, kaleidoscopes of colour shining out through a variety of shades of brown, black and grey.

How could a day that started so well end up so miserable? She reluctantly unhooked his umbrella from her arm and extended it out as she joined the witches and wizards sheltering from the heavy rain. The second she left the brick shelter the umbrella was battered with raindrops, heavy thuds reminding her that if he hadn't given her the umbrella she would have been soaked. Maybe that would have been better than the constant reminder of him sitting at her desk all day keeping her from concentrating.

She was glad she'd changed her shoes as she walked, her work heels wouldn't grip well to the slippery cobbled street. She held the umbrella far down her head, aiming to keep herself

as dry as possible, even if it meant she was relying on memory and the sight of people's feet to stop her bumping into everything. Of course it was typical of the Malfoy's to have an umbrella the deepest black they could find, the well-made material almost impossible to see through. She looked at her hand holding the dark wooden handle and rolled her eyes. It made her hands look tiny, and just next to her thumb sat an intricate letter M. A custom made umbrella; it was a far shot from her cheap collapsible umbrella she often shoved into her bag.

She lifted it just enough for her to peep her eyes underneath the rim of the material. Her shoulders slumped in relief when she saw the dark green door framed by large windows filled with towers of books. It was a shame none of them would be what she needed. This whole trip was probably pointless, but it was all she could think to do.

She pushed herself close to the door, shielding herself from the rain while she folded the umbrella up. She cast a quick drying-spell over it before she hooked it over her arm again, and pushed her back harder against the door.

The bell dinged as she entered the shop, and the shopkeeper's eyes shot up to her, surprised by the sound. She flashed him a small embarrassed smile before she looked away quickly pretending to adjust the umbrella in her arm. Thinking back on it she had been a little brash with him when he had gotten uncomfortable over their lack of books on alphas and omegas. It made no sense to her why most of the Wizarding population were so awkward about it. When it affects so many witches and wizards in society surely it's imperative to make sure that people are educated on it, surely keeping it all a secret only makes things worse. The Ministry's program was a step in the right direction but even they were scant on the details, assuming you already knew everything about being an omega.

She scurried off into the bookshop, happy to see out of the corner of her eye as she passed that the shopkeeper was serving a customer on the second floor of bookshelves. She reached the farthest back corner of the familiar shop, and set her bag and Malfoy's umbrella on a tattered old leather chair she frequently sat in while she sampled the books.

She ran her finger over the leather spines of the books, enjoying the rhythmic pattern of her finger falling in between the gaps in the different sizes along the shelf. She loved that the wizarding world was still so dedicated to the traditional way of making books. They hadn't cheaped out to the thin, plasticky lifeless paperbacks that the Muggle world had. She supposed without technology they still valued printed books, so much so it was possible that brand new books would be sold next to secondhand and were virtually no less valued, sometimes even more so.

'Miss Granger?' a voice interrupted her silent fixation on the slight cracking of red leather against her fingertip.

She took a breath to steady herself as she realised who the voice belonged to, then she turned with a curious 'yes?' that pretended she didn't know who he was. She turned to face the shopkeeper sheepishly looking at her while fiddling with a package wrapped in tan paper. She waited on him to say something, watching him build his courage enough to be able to speak.

Eventually he pushed the parcel out towards her. She looked at it, then back up at him. His smile was an uncomfortable apology. She tugged on the string holding the parcel together and the tan paper crinkled open. The leather book was used, and well-worn. She slipped her finger under the brown leather and lifted it to reveal the first page. The paper was tinted the shade of tea and she had to squint her eyes to read the neat but plain script, 'The Diaries of Rowland Oliver.'

'It's been in my family for a while now,' the shopkeeper's voice was low as his eyes darted around the bookshop, 'he was an alpha.'

Hermione closed the book cover over and ran her hands along the front cover. She stared at it silently for a moment, thinking about how difficult it was for her to get her hands on a book like this. Somehow staring at it just reminded her of how many people would go without this guidance like she had before. How many clueless alphas and omegas fell victim to their own biology armed with no knowledge at all of what was happening to them.

'The book's old but the designations have stayed pretty much the same,' his voice brought her back to the bookshop. She looked up at him as he avoided her gaze, wringing his hands in front of his stomach, 'I'll need it back of course. I can't use it but...' blue eyes finally met brown, 'my son...one day.'

She pulled her eyes away from him back onto the book. She fixed the paper back over the book and carefully re-tied the twine, 'Thank you. I'll take good care of it and bring it back to you.'

Neither of them acknowledged what he had done for her beyond a tight uncomfortable smile at each other as he slowly backed away, 'I hope you find what you're looking for in there. I'm sorry I couldn't get you anything else. This is something that's usually very... tightly guarded.'

There was something she couldn't get off her mind. She kept thinking about those who wouldn't have access to what she now held in her hands. Just before the shopkeeper turned away she reached a hand out towards him to stop him, 'Is this the only way people...learn?'

'Unfortunately yes, or a family member if you're lucky.'

'Thank you,' she put every ounce of sincerity into her voice. She truly was grateful, and she felt horrible about embarrassing him the last time she was here. He pulled his lips into an awkward smile and nodded at her before he shuffled off into the main section of the bookshop, quickly finding himself a mother and daughter staring blankly at a row of brightly coloured books lining a shelf.

She pulled the parcel closer into her chest and lifted her handbag from the armchair, throwing it around her shoulder. She hesitated just for a moment when she lifted Malfoy's umbrella. The diary would maybe tell her more about him than it did her, but it was the best luck she'd had with books yet.

She hooked it once again over her arm and headed for the dark olive green door, sidestepping the towers of books laid out around the shop. When she passed the shopkeeper he smiled

warmly as he shoved his little round glasses up his nose. She focused so much of her attention on putting her gratitude into her expression that she didn't notice the tall man pushing his way through the door.

She collided with something hard, she would have dropped the package in her arms if she hadn't been clutching it tightly to her chest.

'I'm very sorry I didn't see...' she trailed off as her nose picked up the fresh woody scent of someone familiar. Her eyes scanned up his chest, passed a once overly pointy chin to see a familiar smirk pointed maliciously at her, 'Oh it's you again.'

'Twice in one day, Granger,' he raised his eyebrows, mocking surprise, 'one more time and I might think you're following me. Excuse me.' He slipped his body past her, brushing his chest against her arm.

It was an innocent gesture, but for some reason the hackles at the back of her neck stood up. She stared at his back as he talked with the shopkeeper, who had scurried over to the front desk upon his arrival, and tried to decide if it was excitement or irritation that caused the spike.

She chose irritation, 'Me follow you?!' when she walked back towards him with an incredulous laugh.

He twisted his body towards her, leaning his arm against the desk as the shopkeeper disappeared into the back of the shop. He looked at her like she was the most curious creature he had ever seen. She wasn't sure if he was amused or confused by her accusation. Most likely a mixture of both going by the smart-arse look in his smile that made its way into his eyes, 'Well it was you who walked into the middle of Brunch with my friends. I was hardly stalking you then, Granger.'

She narrowed her eyes at him, finding herself at a loss for words. That was what annoyed her most about him; when he was irritatingly right and there was nothing she could say to him. He was the only person who could do that to her. When the shopkeeper appeared she released the hard grip she had formed around the package against her chest. The victory on Malfoy's face was unbearable as she tried to hold her hard stare at him.

The shopkeeper slammed a large heavy volume onto the desk, interrupting their silent war, 'there you are, Mr Malfoy. I took the liberty of wrapping it for you. You know with the rain.'

'Thank you, Mr Oliver,' he smiled genuinely at the man as he reached down and lifted the parcel by its string, 'please charge it to my account as usual.'

Hermione scolded herself for following the hard line of his jaw, for watching the apple in his throat bob as he spoke, and most of all for getting caught under his piercing grey eyes when he turned back towards her. Her eyes darted away as he caught her, but were quickly brought back by the movement of his arm. He held up the parcel in front of himself as if for her inspection, 'See. I'm not following you, Granger. I'm just here to pick up a book I ordered.'

‘What book?’ she asked without thinking, finding herself genuinely curious. Harry and Ron were never into books, it was never a topic they couldn’t share her enthusiasm for. Her curiosity and excitement spoke for her.

‘Rather nosy of you, Granger,’ he mocked, but there was no real venom in it, ‘it’s the latest Herbology book by our old friend Neville Longbottom if you must know.’

She stared in confusion at the packaged up book, now swinging by his side from the string, ‘I didn’t know you were into Herbology.’

His scoff brought her eyes back up to his face, ‘I’m not but plants are pretty important ingredients in potions.’

‘Potions?...’ she initially said in surprise before she thought about it, ‘That makes sense actually you always liked potions in school.’

His eyebrows rose for a fraction of a second before falling down with his eyelids. He lifted his chin and swept his tongue across his lips. He was looking at her so scandalously that for a moment her heart picked up, afraid of whatever he was about to say, ‘And how would *you* know what subjects I liked in school?’ The implication in his tone was deafening.

She scoffed back at him, ‘Because it was the one class no one complained about you groaning in the back row!’ She realised almost as soon as she opened her mouth that her voice was too loud, she was bordering dangerously between amusement and guilt.

She was relieved when he dropped his chin and chuckled, ‘I was a little shit wasn’t I?’

His admission surprised her into a laugh. His eyes shot back up to her as if shocked she would laugh at anything he said. His lips twisted into a smile as if he was delighted he’d amused her. She had never looked at Draco Malfoy before and thought he looked cute. He was at the very best handsome in a haughty ‘knows-it’ kind of way, but there was something in his smile, she couldn’t help but return it. There was a strange kind of truce entered into with that smile, like suddenly they weren’t standing on two different sides of the same battlefield.

The silence stretched on too long. Not focusing on the conversation made it more difficult to block out the clean masculine pheromones cutting through her senses. She wondered if he was feeling it too, the sudden change in the air that made her have to concentrate on keeping her breath even. She wanted to say she felt uncomfortable, but it was more uncomfortably intimate than straight-up uncomfortable. If you asked her later she would probably tell her it was her own reaction to him that unsettled rather than the moment itself.

‘Any particular potion you’re working on?’ She interjected, genuinely interested in the answer but also relieved to focus on the sounds of the words leaving her mouth rather than the air she was breathing into it.

His shoulders hitched momentarily, the sound of her voice through the silence was too loud and rushed even to her own ears. He huffed out a ghost of a laugh as he looked at his feet. She wasn’t sure if it was at himself, or to answer her question.

‘You wouldn’t believe me if I told you,’ he said surprisingly quiet while she stared at his cheeks, trying to figure out if they had just turned a little pinker or if it was her imagination.

She leaned closer to him, forcing herself into his vision even as it was cast downward, ‘Try me,’ she whispered. She had surprised herself with her boldness, she had moved into his space as though it was something natural to her. Now that she was there, she was wholly uncomfortable, but not unpleasantly so. His pheromones were more intense this close to him, and there was a restlessness in the back of her mind encouraging her closer...but she stepped back when his eyes flickered up to her in surprise, putting some distance between his face and hers. She played the act off as something innocent as best she could, but ultimately it was the sort of move that might have seemed innocent among friends, but highly intimate given their history.

He watched her closely for a moment before he raised his arm off to his side, encouraging her to walk in front of him. She immediately followed his unspoken instruction, although she couldn’t pinpoint exactly why she had. Was it her decision? Her curiosity to find out what he was working on, or the power of his alpha capable of gently guiding her into small decisions when her guard was down?

He interrupted her thought pattern when he reached around her to hold the door open, ‘I’ll make you a deal Granger.’

She turned her head around to look at him standing behind her, still holding the door. She tried her best to implant the words, ‘this ought to be good’ into her stare. He glanced at the ground and smiled before looking back up at her, ‘I will tell you all about what I’m working on... if you let me apparate you home.’

He’d done it again. Left her with no arguments. He had her and his smirk said he knew it. She was desperately curious what kind of potions work he was doing that he would need further research into herbology, especially Neville’s. He was working at the cutting edge of the field.

She crinkled the corners of her eyes at him, meeting his victorious smile with a thin transparent disdain that really wasn’t much disdain at all. The wind blew in a few droplets of rain that landed against her shins and it reminded her that she was currently in possession of his umbrella. She would either be asking him to apparate home in the rain and feel like a nitwit, or have an argument in the shop about what to do with the umbrella (because he likely wouldn’t take it back) and she’d still feel like a nitwit. The best option of them all was to allow him to take her home, share the umbrella, and find out about this potion he was crafting.

She convinced herself that was her only motivation before she unhooked his umbrella from her elbow, turned her back to him to extend it just outside the door before taking a step out herself. She twisted on her feet and looked back at him, the raindrops just managing to thud off the back of her umbrella under the limited shelter of the shop’s doorway.

She took a step back farther into the street, ‘Well are you coming or not?’

He beamed a victorious grin at her before he slipped the book inside a pocket of his dark grey dress coat. It must have been charmed because it didn't even make an imprint against his tailored silhouette. He gripped the lapels and folded them up covering the back of his neck as he slipped out of the door. The door closed shut behind them and they were alone.

He reached out, and for a moment she thought he was going to close his hand around hers on the umbrella, but instead he placed it slightly lower, leaving millimetres between her little finger and his pointer. She almost jolted when he spoke, lost in the distance between their hands, 'Not that I think you incapable of holding an umbrella, Granger.' He tugged a little upwards, moving the umbrella above his head, 'but I am considerably taller than you and it would make more sense.'

She released her grip on the umbrella as if it had suddenly stung her, 'Oh yes of course.'

He stepped underneath, putting them so close together their chests nearly touched.

Just a half step forward. It would only take half a step.

She silenced the omega in the back of her mind and turned her body back around to face the street. Malfoy took a step forward and began to make his way down the street. She followed suit, barely staying close enough to him to keep herself dry. He must have noticed because he shifted the umbrella to his other hand and offered her his arm. This was a rather intimate action in the Muggle world, but a standard nicety of the old-fashioned wizard ways which meant he didn't mean anything by it. She politely slipped her arm underneath his and let him walk her forward.

They were about to slip into one of those strange silences, the ones that made the smell of his pheromones scream in her nostrils for attention. She wasn't going to let it happen, 'So when are you going to tell me about this potion you're working on?'

He chuckled next to her and she felt his side move against her arm, reminding her of how close he was, 'I knew it wouldn't take you long, Granger.'

She nudged her elbow into his side lightly, and his body twisted instinctively away from the contact, 'okay okay,' he said through his smile. She noticed how he brought his body back close against her arm as he spoke. She stared up at him while he looked off into the distance. She walked carefully at his side, conscious of the fact that she wasn't watching where she was going. But he had such a curious look on his face she couldn't resist watching him, something ticked in his jaw and she wondered if he was thinking of the proper way to approach whatever it was he was brewing.

'First of all, Granger, I want you to know I'm not going to profit off it. If I can get it working I'm giving it to the Ministry. For free, anonymously. And secondly, I started this long before I met you...again,' he burst.

If this was someone else's life she would have laughed at how he had uncomfortably brushed past their experience with the Ministry's program. But she was just thankful he didn't call it a 'four-day sexcapade' like Ginny had taken to referring to it.

‘So werewolves use wolfsbane potion to remain...themselves under transformation right?’ He lowered his voice, as though they were sharing a secret in the middle of the busy street. Like the couple they had just passed were listening to every word.

‘Yeees,’ she responded musically, encouraging him to continue so she could get as far away from the sexcapade thought as she could.

‘Well, maybe there’s a potion like that for...us. To keep our minds intact so we always have a choice. I’ve been looking into what it is about wolfsbane that affects the *mind* under transformation...’

Hermione could barely hear anything else he said. He rambled on about the different experiments he had done with the wolfsbane plant but she was silent, she suspected the only reason she hadn’t come to a halt was the slight tug at her arm keeping her in step with him.

‘Hermione?’ his voice calling her name pulled her out of her lull, ‘What is it? What’s wrong?’

She looked back up at the concern in his voice, to see it reflected in his eyes. He had stopped walking and she realised she had been silent the whole way through the alley. The bricks shifted on the magical brick wall revealing the small cupboard-like area behind it.

‘I’m sorry it’s just...not what I was expecting,’ she scrambled to put her brain back together after what he had just said, not to mention recover from hearing her name come from his lips with concern.

She watched his shoulders relax, comforted that she had spoken. She looked puzzled at him, while he shook the raindrops from his umbrella, it wasn’t like the old Malfoy to dedicate himself to something he wouldn’t generate money or power from. It especially wasn’t like him to even notice she was quiet never mind be *concerned* about her silence.

‘You really have changed haven’t you?’ the words drifted out of her mouth like thoughts, wispy clouds impossible to keep locked in the one place.

He stopped to look up at her, a slight vulnerability in his eyes. She saw him for a split second, the boy in sixth year whose cheeks were too thin, head held too low, circles under his eyes too dark. But it didn’t last, he redirected his entire face away from her to the umbrella he was shaking, ‘My life was all already mapped out for me, Granger,’ his voice was quieter than usual, less imposing than it could be, the playful little spark he usually held it in dimmed.

‘Then in the war...I lost what little control I had,’ he suddenly shook the umbrella harder, the raindrops splattered off as far as her shins, ‘They forced me to become someone I didn’t like,’ another hard shake. She gripped his arm tighter, the slight squeeze was enough to bring him back to the present. She couldn’t fault him for being angry about what happened to him. The war messed them all up in one way or another.

He hooked his umbrella over the arm she wasn’t holding, ‘I won’t do that again. And I won’t stand by and watch it happen to anyone else.’

He stepped forward through the hole in the wall into the tiny courtyard, bringing her with him. They were no longer under the umbrella, and there was no need for them to continue to walk so close, but he didn't let go, so neither did she. He reached out in front of her to open the door into the leaky. He stepped back and finally slipped his arm out from hers to allow her through the door first. She took the lead, pretending to herself that the only reason she missed the feeling of him at her arms was his heat, and had nothing to do with the fluttering in her chest at being so close to him. It seemed no matter what she told her head her body reacted to him regardless. When his hand pressed tight against her lower back as he followed her into the room, her spine tingled. Sometimes she wondered if it was her omega that was in charge of these things.

'I don't suppose asking if you'd like to stay here for a drink would be a step too far?'

She turned behind her to see him smirking at her. He knew right well he was pushing his luck, so she never even responded to him she just smirked back and twisted her head away from him. The tight spaces between the tables meant he wouldn't see the involuntary teenage smile that spread across her cheeks. She blamed it on the fact that no man had actually asked her out for drinks before. She and Ron had gotten together so...spontaneously, he had never actually asked her on a date.

She pushed through the heavy pub door, partially surprised he didn't leap out from behind her to get it. He was being so polite it was almost suspicious. She held her hand on the door to keep it open before his huge one held it for himself. She turned out onto the road and was relieved to see the rain had died off. She pulled the cloak she'd carefully selected to not be too Muggle or magic, tighter around her shoulders. Now that the sun was hidden behind the grey clouds she found it was a lot colder than she had thought.

She felt Malfoy's hand return to the base of her back and she subconsciously leaned into his heat, missing the warmth of her arm against his side. They stayed silent as they walked through into the apparition point by the alley. She let his hand remain against her back as they walked, she would allow her omega this one small victory. It purred as it enveloped itself in the pheromones she had previously been blocking out.

'So, Granger. Where am I taking you?' Malfoy said as he stepped out in front of her, his hand slipping from his back. He smiled as he walked confidently backwards in front of her.

'I'm perfectly capable of apparating myself, Malfoy' she said the same kind of words she would have said to him before, but now with none of the sting.

Malfoy walked out in front of her, holding his hand to his chest and mocked horror onto his features, 'Now, what kind of gentleman would I be if I left you here without seeing you to your door. My mother would disown me.'

She bit her cheek to try and dampen the smile that grew with his silliness, but it didn't work, 'I'm sure your mother...'

'Besides...our deal was to apparate you home. Not walk you to the apparition point,' he interrupted.

He'd done it again. She was left where she couldn't argue with him. She used to find it infuriating, but instead, she took a step towards him and slid her arm under his again. She called out her address in what was supposed to be a monotone voice but sounded more amused than anything.

The next thing she was aware of was a faint pop, and a disorientating feeling as the world changed around her. She landed neatly on her feet and she must have admitted that she was impressed with his skill, she had barely heard the noise of their apparition never mind the unbelievably uncomfortable sensation that accompanies apparition.

She walked out of the dark corner at the edge of her building to the flight of concrete steps at the front of the townhouse, his arm still tucked in hers.

'I have a question,' she asked when they reached the bottom step.

'I'm sure you have many,' he chuckled as they slowly took the steps one by one.

'How did you get Neville's book so early? I heard it's not going to be released for another month!'

His chuckle turned into a scoff, 'There are still benefits to being a Malfoy, Granger. Even if people constantly assume a lot about you.'

She wanted to chastise him for using his connections, but it was in aid of something good. And as she looked down to the steps in front of her she realised that she was one of the people that had assumed a lot about him.

'I'm sorry,' she said as they reached the top step, her own guilt weighing heavy on her shoulders.

'What for?' he asked, his voice pitched higher in either curiosity or surprise. Perhaps both.

She turned to face him and told herself she was brave enough to look him in the eye. She was, but she was not brave enough not to be intimidated by his heavy stare back at her.

'I'm one of those people.'

'No,' his face suddenly hardened, 'you don't apologise to me.'

'But,'

'You never apologise to me for that, Granger. You don't owe me anything. Not after...everything.'

The 'everything' lay heavily in between them: everything he had ever said to her before, everything that happened in school, everything that happened in the Manor.

'You're changed now.'

'I know.'

The air lay silent between them for a moment. They neither smiled or grimaced at each other, they just looked. They shared a moment in no-man's-land, where neither said or did anything. It was a moment of silence for everything that had happened before. Their truce forming into a silent peace-talk.

A light turned on behind the door, and just like that their moment slipped out of their hands like sand between their fingers.

'I'd better get inside before Harry and Ginny send out a search party,' she tried humour to combat the thick tension in the air, but her hands still fiddled with each other in front of her fluttering stomach.

He chuckled a low-laugh, 'And I better go before Potter has me arrested for kidnapping you.'

'Thank you,' she said as she made her move towards the front door.

He merely smiled and nodded his head at her, making his way down the steps. She watched his back as long as she thought she could get away with it. Puzzled by everything she had learned about him in such a short space of time. She realised she had watched too long when she saw his body begin to shift back towards her. She shot around quickly to the door and grabbed the handle.

'Oh and eh, Granger,' she heard from behind her.

'Yes?' she turned back casually as though she hadn't just flung herself around in a panic.

He stood looking up at her from the bottom of the stairs. He seemed even more handsome from this angle, his cheekbones sharper and his grey eyes larger. His signature smirk had once again been plastered on his face, and his eyes twinkled with his usual mischief.

'Have a nice sleep tonight,' he winked at her before he turned and strode away from her while she stood shocked at the door staring at his white hair moving with the speed of his steps.

It felt like someone had just poured a bucket of ice from the window above her. Her cheeks tingled and she was certain she must have looked like a cherry tomato frozen at her doorstep. He knew. He must know? How the hell could he know?!

Her mind fought from the hold of the brain freeze and she started running after where he had gone, hoping to catch him before he apparated. He must have been slowing himself down to walk beside her because he had already gotten so far.

'What do you mean by that exactly?!' she just managed to shriek as she turned the corner to see him disappear in a flurry of grey. Gone.

I'm making up for lost time with a SUPER long chapter- we are starting to get closer to the end of this story now 😭 I'll be sad to see it go but I can't wait to see what you all think of the end!

So now Hermione KNOWS that Draco has some kind of ideas of the dream!! How on Earth is she going to sleep tonight? 😄 What do we think of this other side of Draco? There's a vulnerability to his playfulness isn't there? How do you feel about the potion he's working on? Does it make sense he would react this way given his past?

As usual, I'm DYING to hear your thoughts- I'm so entertained by seeing what you think so if you feel inclined please let me know!! 😍

Also- feel free to follow/interact with me on Tumblr! You'll get notified of my updates in your feed and I'm always sharing Dramione related content! My username is ComfortableSilences110!

Lots and Lots of Love,
Comfort
xxx

Chapter 10: Forbidden Lavender

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

I saw her again today. Her sweet scent calls to me from across the church hall and it's all I can do not to run to her. I cannot keep her from my mind, I see her in my sleep each night. Just as she was on the first night...but a gentleman does not speak of such things. Father says that I am wasting my time. Her family would never accept me, but what does it matter as long as she does! I made a mistake telling my father about the dreams, he went red-faced as though I'd slapped him and now he frantically whispers to my mother. I often hear him talking about breaking a bond but I do not understand what he means...

Hermione frantically scribbled the word 'bond' on her notepad in bold letters and circled it several times. She slipped the tip of her pen into her mouth and curled her legs tighter into her body on the armchair, ready to return to her reading. But she didn't look at the book, she stared at the note she had made on her notepad until it barely looked like letters anymore. Finally, she reached over awkwardly and scribbled the word 'dreams', putting a question mark at the end before she set her pen back down on the pad and returned to the book.

...An acquaintance told Father of an alpha who had married another omega and eventually with no contact with his bonded they went their separate ways. His omega married someone else and their sentiment faded. I cannot see the same circumstance befalling me and my love. He has not seen what I have seen, felt what I have felt. He does not see how she torments me in my dreams, and every waking hour near her is plagued with fighting the beast in my mind. Father says it is no use, she is significantly above my station and her father will never accept my affections for her. But I must try...her name is burned into me forever. My heart forever belongs to Aquila Black.

Hermione's eyebrows rose when she saw the name. She is one of Draco's relatives, a long time ago. She wrote her name on the notepad next to bond. She wasn't sure how much use the name would be, but she wrote it anyway. She eagerly dropped her pen and returned to the book she was fast-absorbing, skipping past irrelevant sections looking for mentions of him and Aquila, eager for her answers.

Her father has refused me several times now. I do not know that I should ever recover. I met my dearest Aquila in person again. It was so wonderful to see my love in the flesh and not just the cruel temptress that haunts my dreams. The irresistible scent of her reminds me of the lavender fields my father took me to as a boy, a landscape of purple so vivid you could smell it. That's what my dear Aquila is to me, the dreamy kind of scent that drifts through fields of flowers like pollen. She informed me that she has appealed to her father on our behalf many times...he refuses to hear reason. And now he has betrothed her to another. She is to be moved to London and I will likely never see her again...

She couldn't help but feel sorry for poor Rowland. She knew the Black family well, with their obsessions with purity they would never relent and let their daughter marry him. She'd seen the Black family portrait, saw the faces scorched out of any who went against the grain.

She tried to remind herself that this wasn't what she was here for. If anything it would be more beneficial to her to see what happened to him denying this bond he talked about.

Father has arranged a suitable match for me. We will be introduced within the week...I'm told she is an omega and should take Lady Black from my mind. I cannot see how the beast will be satisfied, it has been months since I have seen my dearest beyond my mind's eye but I have no choice. My omega has gone, she belongs to another now. All I have left of her is in my dreams. I could not write here what I see of her, I am scandalised by the mere thought of it. I choose to believe that it is my beast's fabrication because I have little to no control in its domain.

All I can do is hope the woman who is to be my wife satisfies my beast's madness. It grows more and more impatient by the day, with each meeting in my sleep, each brush of her raven black hair I feel my mind slipping away. My mind wanders mid-thought, perspiration drips from my brow onto my parchment, every smell that isn't hers makes me feel sick. I fear my beast has chosen its mistress and will accept no other...

My wife to be is fair, shy and kind. But everything about her revolts me. I had to hold down my bile when I kissed her hand, the scent radiating from her burning in my nostrils. I cannot have any other but my Aquila. I cannot take another. She haunts me in my dreams until I can barely awaken. I disgraced my father by running from my bride, another moment in her presence and I might have lost control completely. I need to go to London. Surely my Aquila feels the same as I do. I do not know how I will find my love. I can only hope my beast lasts the journey. I have heard of men driven mad, their beasts overcoming their senses. I'd hoped the dreams would pacify the beast but I fear they are aggravating it.

Hermione turned the page of the journal and scanned through the increasingly scratchy handwriting, hoping to skip to him finding Aquila. She flipped over two or three pages until the writing was illegible. She frowned at the ink which became increasingly blurred with old stains, what had stayed visible looked like he had written entire sentences on the space for one word, letters layered on top of letters until none of them could be transfigured into sense. She skipped page upon page until the ink was blurred with more than stains, her entire vision blurred as water built in her eyes. This poor man, she had no idea that it would be so hard for an alpha to let go. The program had made it seem like the alphas would recover by being with omegas, but Rowland found every scent after Aquila disgusted him. A tear finally fell from her eye as she blinked, her vision cleared and she turned another page. Around halfway down the page the handwriting returned for a short passage. She quickly adjusted herself in her chair and wiped the remaining tears from her eyes, desperate to clear her vision to understand what happened to Rowland.

I have been returned to my mind, but I fear I shall never be the same. I will not pursue Aquila any farther. I have acquired an acceptable omega wife who has relieved me of my insanity. I shall treat her with the utmost kindness, be faithful and loyal to her, but I shall never love her. I know now that I will be plagued with visions of Aquila until I pass from this world. I will not share this with my wife, for I fear it would be too painful for her to comprehend.

Aquila and I are bonded, she meets me in those dreams, it is not some fragment of my own beast's yearning but hers as well...but it is not to be. For the sake of my own mind and hers, I must ignore the beast that calls for her in the night.

One day I will pass this diary down to my own son. When his body begins to hurt with the pain of stretching to his size, when his beast whispers in his mind and he begins to scent the

world around him, he will understand why. When he bonds with a woman he will know the risks. Had I known what had happened...I would have stolen her away that night I saw her last when she was betrothed to another. Consequences be damned.

For my own son reading this, pass this diary down to your son, or your daughter so she might understand and pass it down to her son. Let not my folly be repeated. Find an Omega agreeable to you and marry her as soon as you can. Be faithful to her in all ways and avoid the madness, for only a suitable omega will still the uncalm waters of the mind of the alpha. I will not have another of my family be as unprepared as I.

Hermione stormed through the doors and strode straight to the reception desk, 'I would like to speak to a healer please.'

The receptionist nearly jumped out of his robes, 'Of course, Miss Granger, one moment. If you'd like to take a seat someone will be with you shortly,' he pushed out all in one breath while scrambling to get off his seat. Usually, she hated that her fame granted her privileges but at this moment she thanked it. If the man had asked her to wait she reckoned she may have bombarded her way through the white halls.

She tried not to feel childish when she didn't sit down but stood remaining at the desk while he scurried off into a back room. She tapped her nails off the counter impatiently while she waited. Rowland Oliver was right, no one should be as unprepared as he was, and a bond was certainly not something the Ministry added to their program documents. She'd gone in completely blind to the risk, all because of the magical world's taboos, stigmas and downright prudishness.

The same little Mediwitch from before appeared from behind a door and walked towards her holding a clipboard that looked huge against her chest, 'It's lovely to see you again, Miss Granger. Would you like to come this way and we can have a chat?' She smiled warmly and held her short stubby arm out down a corridor encouraging her to move.

As Hermione followed the instruction she felt a little of her anger ebb away, it was almost impossible to be angry at this woman, she was so petite and warm. She half expected the woman to produce a freshly-baked apple pie from behind her back. It didn't help that the woman half-skipped when she walked, like a little bumblebee trying to burn off its energy.

They arrived at the same room she had been in for her tests. Hermione stared at the grey door and tried not to think of what it felt like to be here for the first time. She was nervous and desperate, looking for any kind of way out from the heats; she didn't think she'd be signing herself up for a lifetime of dreaming with Draco Malfoy.

'Well dear, what can I help you with?' the Mediwitch shuffled onto her stool so that her feet barely touched the ground.

Hermione sat down across from the Mediwitch and tried to keep her face and voice very matter of fact, 'I want to know why the risk of bonding was not explained in your leaflet.'

The Mediwitch's eyebrows shot up her head as she flinched back in surprise, 'Bonding?' her voice moved to almost a squeak, 'why my dear that's almost unheard of! There is a great deal of controversy on the subject between the healers. Most have decided that it doesn't exist!'

‘I can assure you it does,’ Hermione snapped back.

The little woman took a moment to stare back at her, her smile slowly fading from her features as if something horrible had dawned upon her, ‘You...you are bonded?’ she asked eventually. She lifted her hands to her mouth and thought for a moment.

Something seemed to spark in her eventually, her whole body jolted ever so slightly and her hand slowly returned to its place on her thigh. She leaned closer to Hermione, and finally reestablished her eye contact, revealing the spark had made its way to them, ‘Do you know what you have stumbled upon, my dear?’

Hermione opened her mouth to protest, irritated by the slight smile that had begun to overtake the Mediwitch’s face but the woman again didn’t give her time to answer.

‘You have discovered something wonderful! Not many of us get the luxury,’ she gasped, lifting her hand to her mouth again and looked off into the floor as she rambled, ‘I should have known it from the samples, such extreme reactions from both of you.’

Hermione moved her head towards where the woman was looking, hoping to enter her line of sight and interrupt her monologue, ‘extreme reactions? What do you mean?’

‘Well you went into subspace and he...well I shouldn’t tell you.’

‘It is the least you owe me!’ she finally lost her temper and shouted at the woman. A quick scolding look and Hermione suddenly felt like an impertinent child, her anger suddenly dissipated into shame. She pulled her body back into itself and forced herself to calm down.

‘He went into a trance, similar to yours. That’s all I will say.’

Hermione pictured Draco having the same blackout as her and wondered if that’s how Rowland Oliver ever felt. It seemed too peaceful compared to what he went through, but maybe it was different for alphas.

‘Why didn’t you tell us this could happen?’ Hermione’s voice was smaller now, quiet at the thought of poor Rowland. She stared into her hands on her lap and wondered how long would it take Draco to go through the same.

‘Oh dear.’

Hermione looked back up at the witch towards her kind voice to find kind eyes smiling back at her.

‘We didn’t know it could. The most we have heard of it is from accounts written long ago. Did you never think about why most wizards and witches marry almost straight out of school? It prevents any incidences and we just don’t have enough evidence to prove it really exists. Up until now the wizarding population all married young and into designations. Your generation is the first to have a large section of the population left unmarried. Before this program these sorts of things weren’t spoken of. They still aren’t! We are trying to change that, make things easier for you, but we can only go so far.’

‘Why?’ she asked, frustration leaking into her voice. She was fed up being met with the same problem. The same reluctance to change she seemed to be facing everywhere, this need to keep basic biology behind closed doors only to the peril of the poor ignorant souls struggling through it.

The Mediwitch stared at her for a moment, sizing her up as if she had just realised she had spoken too much. The witch leaned back in her seat, her decision made, ‘some members of the Ministry believe this program is inappropriate,’ she held her little fingers up like bunny rabbit ears bouncing up and down to show her distaste.

‘Are you the only one who wants this?’ Hermione asked quickly, the beginnings of an idea forming in her mind.

‘No, most of us healers are in agreement. The stigma needs to end so we can properly help those who need us.’

Hermione took a second to think it over before she said, ‘Leave it with me. Thank you for talking with me.’ She gathered her handbag and pulled it over her shoulder. She stood from the chair just as the Mediwitch slipped down from her stool.

‘Miss Granger?’

She turned around and looked back at the petite woman, who was smirking at her like she had some great secret, at odds with the fact that she had actually revealed one.

‘You don’t think it now, I understand that, but you are a very lucky woman. As is your alpha. You have something between you that no one else can match.’

Hermione didn’t dare answer, instead she smiled back at the woman and reached for the door handle. Just as she was about to pull it she stopped, halted still as if someone had suddenly pressed pause on her body. She tilted her body back slowly and looked back at the Mediwitch, ‘this isn’t just a service for getting through heats is it?’

The Mediwitch shrugged her shoulders, but everything in her face told Hermione she had hit the nail on the head. This was a matchmaking service. The Ministry’s way of reducing the number of unattached alphas and omegas in their society. It would help omegas through their heats, and stop the alphas from going mad but it also aimed to pair them off, reducing the chances even further of an incident. It was astonishingly clever, and annoyingly simple when she thought about it. How could it have gotten past her? She was so focused on her own situation she didn’t bother to notice it.

She huffed out a quiet laugh before she left the room, shaking her head at herself. As she walked back towards the doors she couldn’t help but think about how obvious it all was now; the tests, the rooms, even the secrecy. It’s all designed to pair you off with your best option and to tantalise you with their secret identities. If they got it wrong they could simply pair you with another until they got it right with no repercussions.

They had simply bit off more than they could chew with her, but she was determined to work the program into something better. She smiled at the receptionist on her way out, a way of

apologising for her manner to him earlier, and decided that she'd be one of the last to face this blind.

Chapter End Notes

So Hermione finally knows the meaning of the dreams! 🤯 Is it what you expected? What do you think of what happened to Rowland Oliver and Aquila Black?

As always I want to say thank you for everyone reading along with this story and I would absolutely love to hear from you!

And as an apology for being gone so long- have a clue for the next chapter which will be coming out sooner than you might think! The clue is...hunt. 😊

Lots of Love,

Comfort

xxx

Chapter 11: Hunting Strawberries

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Mentally, she was already on the other side of the door before she even opened it. She burst into the kitchen and headed directly to the cupboard as if she couldn't see anything else but it. She pulled open the doors and began rifling through the contents, pushing vials and packets of tablets all mixed together out of her way.

'Hermione?' a voice called out from behind her.

She lifted a flask of Pepper-up potion and set it on the kitchen counter and ignored the voice.

'Hermione? Are you okay?' the voice insisted.

She finally relented and spun around towards Harry, 'Have we not got a dreamless sleep potion anywhere in this house?!'

Harry visibly retracted but kept his sharp green eyes focused on her. He was in his blue checked pyjama bottoms, his hair messed with sleep and his face missing his glasses. Without the glass covering his eyes, they seemed even more penetrating and she couldn't meet his gaze. She pushed her hair out of her face and leaned back against the counter. She stared at her feet as her anger dissipated and a pang of terrible guilt settled in her gut.

'Sorry, Harry,' she said quietly, voice small with remorse. None of this was Harry's fault, and she knew that.

Harry still didn't speak, and she didn't dare look at him. She had no interest in festering her guilt. She heard him take a deep breath through his nose, and then his footsteps across the kitchen. With a distinct pop of the switch at the bottom of the kettle, she knew there was no longer avoiding the topic.

Harry opened the cupboard above the kettle and lifted out two cups, 'Sit down, Hermione.'

She took a seat at the small table in the kitchen and watched Harry's back silently as he made them tea, the Muggle way. There were simply some things you never got out of the habit of doing. You could make tea in seconds with magic but it wasn't the same, as if the very ritual of making tea was part of the cleansing of it all. She shot her eyes down again when he turned around, two mugs in hand. He set them on the table and took the seat opposite her.

'Tell me what's going on,' his words were direct but his voice was calm. She looked up and saw one of the worst expressions Harry was capable of, worry. It always caught her off-guard, even when she was expecting it. She'd spent so much of her life worrying about him that seeing it reflected back was borderline offensive to her.

She wrapped her hands around the mug and let the calming heat seep into her fingers. She wanted to smile and say ‘nothing’ and ask him about anything else to take him off-topic. But instead, she lifted the mug to her face, took a small sip and let the warm comfort soothe her throat and settle the flutters in her stomach.

‘The man...the alpha...that I was with...’ her heart pounded in her chest, everything in her told her to pull it back, to keep the secret locked in, to speak it aloud was incriminating, and once it was out there it could never be taken back. She took a deep breath, lifting her shoulders high and expanding her chest like she was pulling the information from the depths of her body, and it was too much for her to contain. In one last fit of peril, she forced herself to meet Harry’s green penetrating eyes, ‘It’s Malfoy.’

The worrying lines on Harry’s forehead dug deeper into trenches as his eyebrows shot up his face and his green eyes widened. He looked behind him as if they had both just committed a crime, and he was checking for witnesses. When his head whipped back around she could already see the word ‘Malfoy’ forming on his lips as an exclamation. She didn’t let it escape him, her own truth was bursting through her at the seams.

She sprung up out of her seat, the skittish energy having nowhere to go but through movement, ‘And now, we have this like bond thing...’ she held her hands out in front of her as if she was holding a beach ball, repeatedly shaking it as if it could somehow take control of the involuntary shakes and make them her choice, ‘...and for some fucking reason we meet in our dreams every night and I’ve only just found out that he’s actually there I’m not just imagining him,’ she riffled her hands through her hair as she paced back and forward, ‘Harry, it’s never going to stop. I mean not ever. I read this diary of this man who had the same thing and it never stopped for him.’

‘Hermione!’

She jumped at the feeling of his hands on her upper arms, only just noticing that he had risen from his seat. At his touch, she threw herself at him, tucking her head against his shoulder and allowed herself the deep breath she’d been denied in her frenzy. Harry stumbled back only for a moment and then she felt his arms wrap around her, while his chin came to rest on top of her head. Her heartbeat began to slow down, and the nervous energy fizzling around her limbs relented. She softened into his grip and shut her eyes tight.

Harry had long since passed being a friend to her, he was more like family. A hug from him was like holding onto the last bit of family either of them had left, and it made her feel safe. Harry was an older brother to her, even if she was the oldest, and his hugs always made her feel safe.

They stood there for a while in silence. Hermione couldn’t tell how Harry felt about any of it but now that the secret had been let out she felt lighter for not lumbering it around on her shoulders.

‘Do you think he’s changed?’ Harry eventually mumbled into her hair.

She didn’t have to think about it, she could barely even imagine the Malfoy she’d known at school and the man she’d met sharing the same face they were so different.

‘Yeah,’ she said into his jumper, ‘a lot actually.’

They finally pulled apart and smiled at each other awkwardly, a bit surprised by the sudden display of affection.

‘He’s working on a new potion for alphas and omegas,’ she said just to break the tension and give her an excuse to sit back down at the table without it seeming weird, ‘He thinks if there’s a potion for werewolves there should be a potion for us too. To allow us to keep our minds during...well you know.’

Harry lifted his cup from the table and leaned against one of the chairs, ‘fuck that doesn’t seem like Malfoy,’ he said as he lifted his mug for a drink.

‘Yeah, he’s a little different now. Still an arrogant git at times but...’ she fiddled with the cup in front of her on the table, swirling it around by the handle until a little of the brown liquid spilt over the edge and onto her fingers, ‘he’s been nice. So far.’

‘So why are you avoiding him?’

For once she cursed that Harry was so dreadfully to the point sometimes, ‘I don’t know.’ She looked down into her tea hoping it could somehow tell her what to do. She almost laughed at the realisation that it could, but she’d never believed in any of that.

Harry stared down at the table for a minute. Hermione thought he looked like he was riffling through various responses and finding each of them inadequate, his mouth opening and closing every few seconds like a fish breathing in water. Eventually, he settled on one, ‘Every time it’s come up...Ginny has had this stupid big grin on her face, and your cheeks go pink.’

She opened her mouth to protest but ultimately decided to shut it when she saw Harry’s eyebrows raised, challenging her to deny it. She lifted her cup to her mouth instead in defeat.

‘I don’t know the details, and God I don’t want to,’ He looked away and closed his eyes tight as if he could blind himself to the images in his mind, ‘But you were fine until you knew who he was,’ he opened his eyes again and she lowered hers back to her cup, unable to meet the genuine concern in his gaze, ‘if that’s all that’s stopping you, I think you should give him a chance.’

Her eyes shot up from her mug, he was serious. It was the last response she had expected from Harry. She knew Harry had forgiven Draco for his part in the war but she didn’t think he had come this far, and yet she couldn’t fault his logic. They had been well-matched for the days they had spent together.

‘It’s just all so fast, Harry,’ she tightened her fingers around her cup, ‘I didn’t even think it was possible. I thought we had to do the whole gland thing before anything this serious would happen. Apparently half of the healers didn’t know this could happen. Trust of anyone this kind of thing would happen to me.’

‘You know I think about what Professor McGonagall said to us in sixth year all the time,’ Harry shrivelled up his voice as close as he could to McGonagall’s and attempted the worst

Scottish accent she had ever heard, ‘why is it when something happens it is always you three?’

Hermione’s face betrayed her into a smile that grew into a soft chuckle with Harry. It was like one of those moments where if she didn’t laugh she’d cry, and she’d rather laugh. Ever since she’d walked onto that train to Hogwarts she’d been near the centre of nearly every crisis or phenomenon since. Of course, this would happen to her, who else could it happen to.

Eventually, their gentle laughter simmered back down into the quiet. Harry leaned back from the chair and folded his arms across his chest, he stared at the ground in thought, before he walked away from the table. For a minute Hermione thought he was going to leave the kitchen but he stopped just before the cupboard she had been riffling through. He stood up on his tiptoes and reached for something way in the back of the cupboard.

‘I’ll stand behind any decision you make,’ he set the green glass bottle onto the table, ‘but I think the guy has maybe earned the chance to shoot his shot. And after everything you’ve been through, you deserve a little happiness, Hermione.’

He pushed the potion towards her and lifted his hand from it completely. She lifted the bottle up in her hands and read the label, ‘Dreamless sleep.’

‘It’s up to you, Hermione,’ Harry half-smiled at her before he left her to her decision.

She can smell him. A faint trace misting its way to her, just to stop her forgetting he’s coming for her. She swears she can hear his heart racing from all directions around her, but the thudding in her chest tells her it’s more likely her own heart projecting itself around her. He must feel it too, the anticipation in the air. The truth is she wants him to catch her, the butterflies in her stomach aren’t panicking, merely fluttering around in expectation. But she won’t make it easy for him, she wants to feel him hungering after her, to feel his footsteps at her heels, his breath on her neck as she runs.

He can smell her. The lure of sweetness calling out to him like a plea. She wants him to catch her, he knows she does. He can sense the excitement in her, it tingles through the air and lifts the hairs on his skin. He stops, pulls his jacket from his shoulders and throws it on the floor behind him. It’s an expensive suit, but not nearly as precious as the treasure he currently hunts. He rolls up the sleeves of his shirt, it exposes more of his light skin hiding behind the darkness of his clothes, but he would feel her better.

She takes a slow careful step in front of her, and keeps her feet light. She tries to keep her shoes from making a noise on the dark tiled floor, but each foot lands with a little click like a slow clock ticking down the time until she’s found. She doesn’t bother trying to squint her eyes to see where she’s going, it wouldn’t make it much clearer. Her only light source comes from the glow of the crystal prophecies on the shelves towering above her head. She had already considered casting a lumos, but decided it would be a dead giveaway. He would see it and come for her.

He glances his eyes upward and huffs a breath to himself. He can't see a bloody thing. He lifts his wand to his eyes and tries to quantify the risk of casting a spell. He stares into the point of his wand and whispers so quietly it's almost a breath, 'oculi vulpinum.' He can feel his irises re-shaping themselves while the world moulds itself in front of him. His face twists up into a smirk as row upon row of crystal balls appear in front of him. He flicks his hair out of his face and continues on with new eyes.

She hears something. A sound so soft and quiet she instantly questions whether she heard anything at all. She stops dead, holding her position, one foot in front of the other. She slowly pivots her head behind her where she thought she'd heard the noise. She can feel her heart beating off her ribcage, so loud it almost blocks out the sound of another whisper passing by her like a ghost in the distance. She desperately tries to pinpoint the location of the sound, somewhere behind her and maybe off to the left a little? She stops herself from taking a deep breath, and decides that standing still is the only sure way to make sure she gets caught. She turns back around and tries to make out the glow at the end of her vision. It's a floating ball of light, illuminating the end of her lane of shelves into a dangerous crossroad. She can't go back, going back would only place her right where she'd heard the sound. So she continues on.

He takes a moment to breathe, slow and quiet through his nose and finds the smell is closer. She is leaving little red berries behind her for him to follow, and he is going to take every last one to her. He listens and wonders if the ticking noise is his heart or her feet. He feels something to his right, like a shift in the hair across his bare forearms, and he has an idea to flush her out to him. He looks ahead to the end of the road of shelving and lifts his wand to it. He sends a pulse of kinetic energy towards a glass ball sitting dangerously close to the edge of the shelf. It rocks back and forward for a moment, before falling to the floor and shattering, a dust cloud of blue erupting from the remains.

The second she hears the shattering glass she covers her mouth to stop herself from screaming, the sudden sound bursting through the silence splintering her nerves. She pushes herself back against the shelf and immediately realises her mistake when it sways against her back. She hadn't expected them to be so easily moved, she looks up and watches as several glass balls shake on a shelf far above her. Shit.

It's not long before his call is answered. He hears several rocking sounds above him, he looks up and sees dozens of crystal balls wobbling above him. He's got her, she must be in the next set of shelves. The glass begins to fall like heavy balls of ice behind him as he runs, each one exploding in a plethora of colour he's not able to see with his fox eyes.

She takes advantage of the first wave of crystal balls hitting the ground and points her wand towards the nearest shelf. The wood twists and shapes around the glasses, peeling itself open into an archway in the shelves. As soon as she runs through the clearing it creaks and groans behind her, twisting back into its natural shape, like a magical maze revealing itself to her and only her. The hunt pushes her forward with little time to assess how she feels, it pushes her to keep casting, keep transfiguring the shelves and ducking through them before they have even finished. But she can feel his excitement, it tickles along her skin as if his breath was at the back of her neck. She lingers on that thought as she pushes through another archway, letting it pump through her veins until it finds its place between her legs.

She finally stops and points her wand down to her feet and chances a whisper while the wooden shelves creak and groan back into position for what feels like miles behind her. She sinks further into the floor as her shoes transform themselves into light black slippers, like the little ballet shoes she used to wear before Hogwarts. She points her wand in front of her and fires three bursts of her transformation spell off quickly. The next three shelves twist into her doorways, but instead of going through them she darts off to her left leaving him to the decoy path through the shelves. When she reaches the crossroads she presses her back against the end of the shelving, hiding just out of his sight. The wood is cold and calming against her skin, and she tries not to keep her back flat to it so as not to pant herself into detection. She magically dims the floating light above her and reaches behind her to slip one of the crystal balls into her palm. She charms it quickly and holds it up. She angles the newly charmed crystal mirror until she can see her decoy path behind her.

The chase is intoxicating to him. Each new archway is like a new berry to him, more directions to the delicious tree of their origin. He can catch her. He suddenly smells the strawberry veer off to the left, and he stops, curious on whether to follow his nose or his eyes. In the end he spots a glimmer of sliver out of the corner of his eye and he knows it's her, off to his left. Instead of following her, he rushes forward into the next shelf, he has a plan now that he knows where she is.

As soon as she sees him fall for her trap, she steps into the middle laneway of shelves and pulls her arm back. She stifles a grunt as she launches the crystal ball as far off as she can manage before she turns and sprints in the opposite direction. She winces as she hears it smash along with several other clatters as she turns into a new shelving aisle, but she keeps her focus. A rainbow of prophecies blur past her as she runs, stretching her legs out until they almost hurt. When she feels like her chest might burst, she stops, trying to subdue the pain in her chest from keeping her breaths quiet despite her pace. She takes a moment to stand still and finally lets herself pant a little, confident that she has lost him this time. She presses her hands to her knees and tries to mutate her short rushed wheezes into quieter, longer, controlled breaths. As she stares at her feet she sees it and her breath stops altogether for a moment.

A green fog drifts into her vision, swarming around her ankles. He must be close, he must be closer than he had been before. She turns slowly, careful to spin on the pads of her feet rather than lift them. Her breath threatens to betray her every minute, and that's when she hears his. He's close, very close. So close, it seems he's already decided he has won, finding no need to hide his presence from her. In fact he rather calls to her as the green fog climbs it's way upward, snaking around her nose, wafting the hypnotising scent of mint and sandalwood up her nostrils, clouding her brain.

She shakes her head, trying to rid herself of the fog clogging her senses. When her eyes refocus she sets out to find the source of the fog. If she can find him, she can outmanoeuvre him. The mist seeps around the glowing prophecies, tinting the colourful blue prophecies into a sinister teal. She thinks she spies something, two amber buoys floating amongst the blue-green sea. She squints her eyes and tries to get closer, she breathes out through her nose and the fog scatters, waves rolling away to reveal...eyes. Split down the middle like a cat staring back at her, amber gold eyes that see right through her. His eyes are grey but she's not facing him, she's facing the alpha now.

She can feel her own eyes go wide like a deer staring down headlights. She doesn't wait to be hit. She runs, she runs until her heart feels like it will burst in her chest because she is not alone. For every foot she slams into the tiled floor she hears another corresponding foot on the other side of the shelves, chasing her, hounding her in. It's absolutely thrilling, she's never felt more alive than this, simultaneously in his grasp and running from him. Her arms move in and out of her sight as she runs in a pink blur, she lifts her hands in front of her and sees them leak her own mist, calling out to him from across the prophecies.

He can burst his way into her shelves at any time, but he teases her, lets her run until her feet burn. It's a thrill, watching her body fly with him in a pink blurr. He can see his own scent leaking out into the world but all he can focus on is the whiff of sweet strawberries filling his senses. The shelves cease to exist, the world ceases to exist. It's just him and her running through space, filling it with beautiful shades of green and pink, and he's addicted to it.

It's inevitable. Her own body betrays her, desperately wanting to cross the boundary into his territory and it's enough to convince her that she's had her fun. But she's not going to play his game, she's Hermione Granger, and far too stubborn to lose without a show. She beams a bright and brilliant smile as her idea forms into a plan in her mind. She reaches into her pocket for her wand and holds it ready. She halts to a sudden stop, almost tripping over herself with the spontaneity of it. She points her wand at the shelves and sends a crackling burst of magic at them, shrinking a section of them until she could run right past them, no more than a few inches taller than her feet. Now she's hunting him.

He turns the moment he realises she's behind him, but it's too late. She slams into his chest and they both go tumbling to the floor. His hands almost instinctively wrap around her, pulling her close to him as they slide a few inches along the tiled floor. It's not as painful as he'd expect, but it's hard to tell with her clawing at him. Her lips eventually find him, and she pulls him into a rough kiss by his tie.

His hands grip her so tight it's almost painful, but she doesn't care. Her nails are likely digging into him as she tries to pull at his clothes, needing the offending items gone. She isn't alone in her enthusiasm, he pushes his tongue into her mouth as he finally rips the front of her shirt open, and she can't help but push her chest into his greedy palms.

Her hands wrap around his cock and he's not even sure when she managed to free it. His mouth opens in a desperate growl, breaking their kiss but she can feel her smile victoriously against her lips. He can't have her win. He pushes up his body and spins them around until he's on top of her. He holds her wrists against the floor and slams his body down on hers when she tries to get back up from him. He presses his lips against hers and finds her aroused aggression channelled into her fierce tongue.

She can't help but let him hold her down while he kisses her, each second he pins her drives the thumping need between her legs to beat even harder. She pulls her tongue back and bites his lip, hard. He flinches and pulls back, dragging his tongue against the lip to taste the small amount of blood she had drawn. She smiles up wickedly at him, having gotten her way, but her victory doesn't last for long. He returns her smile, somehow seeming more wicked and full of promised vengeance. He holds her wrists even tighter and moves his head down to her chest, taking full advantage of her skewed bra to suck her nipple into his mouth. She cries

and throws her hips full force at him, the arousal almost painful with no means of relief. He doesn't budge, he merely rides out her attack, rolling his tongue around her swollen tip to make her throw her head back and whimper.

'Draco, please!' she doesn't register she's going to beg him until the words are already out of her mouth in a high-pitched plea.

In two words she almost had him coming against her like a schoolboy. She mesmerised him, teased and taunted him, fought and encouraged him all in one breath. The only woman smart enough to match him, and the only one feral enough to attack him while he's hunting her. He releases her hands a little while he tries to keep a grip on himself, his dominance of his own body almost in tatters.

She takes advantage of his surprise and tugs her hands out of his grip. She pushes against his shoulder and throws her body weight on top of him. He tries to fight but she already has his cock in her hand. His mouth opens in a needy pant as he stares up at her, his resolve to be dominant weakened by the grip of her hand and it's all she can do to not come for him right then and there when she slides his cock along her slit. She takes one last look in his eyes for permission, to see them begging silently back at her. She pushes herself down and impales herself on him. They both let out a howl, like pent up energy finally being released from a valve about to blow. She doesn't rock back and forward on him slowly, she immediately sets to bouncing up and down on him mercilessly, his cock easily gliding through her wet lips. She has to take it from him while she still has control of his body. She doesn't just want this, she needs it. The only air she can breathe is the pink and green swirling around them.

He can't fucking think with her on his cock. She rides him like she's feral, and he is too busy convulsing into her and surrendering to his own need to fight her. He doesn't want to stop her, oh merlin no, he just wants to be the one pounding into her, to make her submit to him. He rolls her onto her back, her small frame easily moved while she's distracted in chasing her own end. She pushes her hands against his shoulder only for a moment, until he pounds his hips against hers. He knows he's found the spot when each little breath comes out of her like a whimper, he resolves to stay in exactly the same position until she screams against his neck.

Everything is lost to her. If you asked her her name at this very moment the only name that could leave her lips would be his. Her nails dig into his back, the mounting pressure becoming unbearable in her body. He moans against her neck and she bites his in return, brushing her teeth against the soft gland in his neck. He makes a rugged noise in his throat and she takes advantage, pushing him back until his back lands against a set of shelves. She climbs back into his lap, and he's back inside of her. He pushes his hips up into her while she grinds down on him, chasing their orgasm together.

She can feel it rising within her, the pressure only enhanced by her clit rubbing against him as they move. The closer she gets the less she can think, her entire being concentrated on the space between her legs. His hips buck even harder into her while he growls in her ear, he's getting close too. The knowledge shatters the last of her control, and the last thing she

remembers is the taste of mint from his neck, and the sharp but blissful pain coming from hers.

Their bodies pulse and frantically move together as they ride the spark of their pleasure together, biting and licking each other in the haze of green and pink smoke swirling around their skin. They both grip tight to the other, the pain only enhancing the waves of pleasure taking their control. From nearly every pore of their skin the green and pink leak. If they could open their eyes they might not even see each other. And then all they have is their hearing, the other's breath panting in their ear while the world dissolves into fog.

Hermione woke up in a panic. She leapt from the bed and stared at the wet patch shaped like her, she looked down to find her pyjamas soaked in sweat. She lifted out her arms and ran her fingertips along her burning forearm in horror, 'Oh god not again! Not *bloody* now!'

Chapter End Notes

Forgive me uploading this two wines deep on a Tuesday night but hey....it's here! 😂
I said this chapter would be coming a little sooner than expected! (by that I mean there hasn't been a month between updates 😊)

Please please let me know what you thought of it!! I'm particularly eager this chapter because the dream sequence is verrrry different this time and we've been waiting for the hunt since it was hinted at earlier in the story ;) ! Is it as you expected it to be??

Thank you to everyone reading and interacting with this story, I really really hope you are enjoying it so far! We are almost at the end can you believe?! 😘

Lots and lots of love as always,
Comfort ♥
xxx

Chapter 12: Hot Roses

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Draco had spent most of his morning feeling pretty pleased with himself. The dream last night was the last nail in the coffin. He was certain it was only a matter of time now before Granger put her stubborn nature to the side and give them a shot. She'd *caught him* in the end, it was as close to an admission that she wants him as any.

When a Ministry owl pecked aggressively at his window he was certain it would be her. He dropped everything he was doing to get it, including the latest version of his potion which spilled all over the battered table he'd rebelliously placed in his father's old study. It hissed as it fizzled away a small portion of the wood. Oh well, it wouldn't be any good for human consumption anyway if it made that quick work of a chunk of wood. The owl impatiently pecked at the window again, even as it watched him approach.

'Alright, alright I'm coming,' he opened the window and the bird spat the letter out at him, flying off before he could even open the message, 'bloody Ministry don't teach their owls any bloody manners,' he mumbled to himself as he slipped his letter opener under the Ministry wax seal.

Malfoy,

Please advise whether you are available for a meeting over lunch today at the Pâtisserie d'Angleterre at noon. There is something I wish to discuss with you urgently.

Kind Regards,

Hermione Granger.

Typical Granger. He snorted as he folded up the note into his potions apron. She even makes invitations to lunch sound like 'invitations' to speak to the Principal. It's a wonder she didn't address it to Mr Draco Lucius Malfoy. He whistled for his owl as he walked to his father's old desk shoved into the corner of the room.

Hermione,

I would be delighted to join you for lunch. I'll see you there.

He hesitated over how to finish his note. He had already intentionally skipped past her formality by only using her first name. He wanted to make her do that cute little exhale that blows her unruly hair out of her face when he's annoyed her, but he didn't want to push it. Pansy insisted he finish his notes to her with a 'Love, Draco,' and with Blaise he would just sign his family name at the bottom. Neither seemed fitting for her. He half-contemplated writing Alpha at the bottom, but with a huff of a laugh he dismissed the idea and simply signed his first name. Neither too formal, nor too friendly, he convinced himself.

He turned to the window and found his eagle owl sitting proudly in the open window, her wings so quiet he barely even heard her land. He held a treat out for the bird, which she took gently with her beak, swallowed in one go, and then looked up expectantly at him shifting from foot to foot. He held up the letter and she wrapped her beak around it, cautiously avoiding his fingers, before she took off without a sound.

Draco slipped protective gloves over his hands and slowly lifted the vial that had fallen over, 'That's how you train a bloody bird.'

Hermione was already in a fluster by the time she reached the lifts in the Ministry. The weather had seemed to skip the Spring entirely and blasted straight through into Summer, and that was before the early signs of an upcoming heat started. She'd often heard of her mother complaining about hot flushes, she hadn't expected to have to deal with them until at least her forties. But here she was, dreading the lift doors closing and stopping what little air circulation she had.

The doors began to close and she decided to at least be grateful that she was alone, coming in early to meet with Shacklebolt meant there weren't many people around. The lift came to a stop with a little bounce not long after it took off. Hermione stumbled for a moment until she readjusted to the unexpected movement. She scoffed to herself, cursing the snail's pace of the Ministry in getting the magic of the lifts serviced. It had been months now and it was getting increasingly sticky at basement level five. The doors shuttered open to reveal Neville Longbottom looking downward as he stepped towards the lift. He must have realised suddenly that the lift was not empty when his eyes rose to her.

'Hermione,' his shoulders jolted upwards as he spoke.

'Neville!' she responded, trying to sound bright even as her shirt scratched uncomfortably against her sensitive skin. If she was honest with herself she only pulled off a pleasant tone out of surprise. She hadn't seen Neville in a few years, and he had grown considerably. He almost had to bend to get into the lift. If she hadn't known that Neville was a kind and gentle man she might have been intimidated standing next to him.

He shuffled in with less of his usual awkwardness and smiled gently as he stood next to her. The lift doors began to close and they stood in a moment of silence as they were closed in together. A few more seconds of silence passed while Hermione tried to think of something to say, she imagined he was going through the same predicament when he coughed awkwardly into his hand.

‘I hear congratulations are in order,’ Hermione finally chirped, delighted she had found something to fill the quiet. She smiled up at him, but felt her confidence wane when his smile melted down his face. He looked at her like she had just revealed his deepest secret, he opened his mouth to speak but nothing came out. It was entirely the wrong time to notice that he had begun to grow out a short beard which only exaggerated the fact that Neville the boy had very quickly become Neville the man.

‘I heard your new book is to be published soon...’ she cautiously filled the silence to distract her mind from its current train of thought. Neville’s broad shoulders relaxed around him as if he had just remembered how to breathe and his head fell into his chest with a smile, ‘yes, yes it comes out really soon,’ he looked back up at her and held raised his eyebrows as if he had just remembered something, ‘If you’re interested I could get you an early copy?’

‘I would love that actually!’ her intellectual enthusiasm answered for her while her brain tried to banish any associations between Draco and Neville’s book from her mind. That was the one he had gotten an early copy of in the bookshop.

She was quickly distracted by another wave of heat descending over her cheeks. Bloody hell.

She reached up almost dropping the folder she had shoved into her arms at the last minute on the way out of the house and tucked a piece of hair behind her ear. The instant relief from the warmth was dampened by the sensitivity of her gland, the hair glided across it like a soft brush of a hand, and it sent all the wrong feelings through her body. She suppressed a moan with a cough like something had caught in her throat and regretted not putting her hair up that day. She had a few emergency bobbles somewhere in her bag but she didn’t want to risk fumbling through her stuff only to drop her folder and look like a fool in front of Neville. Why it suddenly mattered to not embarrass herself in front of him she didn’t know, she’d never worried much about it before. She could just wait until she gets to her desk and dump everything down onto it.

‘I’ll have one sent to you.’

She almost jumped at the sudden change in Neville’s voice. His words came out like a rasp, low and pained. She looked up at him to see his lips held closed tight. In fact, everything about him was closed tight, his knuckles were white against his briefcase handle, his brows were furrowed together and his shoulders were hunched down. Everything about him said that he was in pain.

‘Neville are you...oh,’ she stopped herself when she smelled it. The faint trace of burning wood drifted into her nostrils and it clicked in her mind. Neville was an alpha. In fact Neville was an Alpha among the ones chosen for her. He was clearly holding onto his pheromones but the sweeter hint of burning marshmallows in his scent told her he was losing the battle.

She tucked her hair back in front of her gland, trying to dampen the sudden awkward pheromone storm picking up in the closed lift. She wondered for a moment what it would have been like if she had chosen Neville the day she picked from the lines of test tubes. She saw the whole thing played out in her head in her omega’s reaction to him. While she couldn’t deny that Neville had grown very handsome and that he was always kind and sweet, she didn’t feel the physical pull to him. He was a friend, she’d never see him as more than

that. Besides, her omega seemed to prefer the least convenient option it could find to be attracted to. She looked down to her feet and smiled at that, it really did feel like it chose Malfoy just to spite her for avoiding alphas for so long.

‘Hermione...I’m sorry.’

‘It’s perfectly all right, Neville,’ she smiled gently at him, and he returned it, his green eyes soft with an apology that was never required.

The doors opened and Neville practically jumped out of them. He looked back quickly and gave her an awkward hand gesture goodbye before he sped off down one of the Ministry’s endless corridors.

As the lift doors began to close she started to doubt her decision to come into work today. She still had a few days until her heat by her estimation but perhaps it was different now she’d been with an alpha. Perhaps her worst decision yet would be to meet with Malfoy later. She contemplated forgetting the whole thing, but her heat was coming and she’d ran out of time. The doors opened again and she hurried towards her desk, relieved to breathe fresher air but dreading writing a perilous invitation to Malfoy.

To an onlooker, it must have looked as though he swaggered down the road rather than walked. He half-expected her to jump into his arms the second he walked in after the dream last night. He glanced down at his feet and smiled at his shoes blurring in and out of his vision as he contemplated the ridiculous notion that she might sneak up and tackle him from behind just like last night. He laughed and shook his head at the idea, looking like a bloody buffoon in the middle of the street. He didn’t care, he slipped his hands into his pockets and kept striding forward.

When he saw her standing amongst the flowers, his mouth moulded into an all out ‘I know what you did last night’ grin while she checked her watch. He was on time, which to Hermione Granger must have meant he was late.

The weather had been good lately, the April sun felt more like June’s, but even at that she showed a surprising amount of skin for her. She’d paired her work appropriate pencil skirt with a lilac tank top, tight to her body and neatly tucked into her grey skirt. If he had to guess he’d say she was wearing a lilac shirt today that she’d taken off in the heat. The troubling thing was that it wasn’t that warm. He had opted for a Muggle style suit and hadn’t even felt the need to take his jacket off and drape it over his arm. It must have just been the heat of that mess sitting on top of her head. Her bun held on tight to what strands of her hair hadn’t yet whisked away into rogue curls, the messy bun itself was almost the same size of her head. When his eyes followed one of the strays down the side of her neck he forgot what he was thinking about, lost in the memory of her strawberries against his tongue.

She blew a stray curl from her forehead as she huffed at her watch. She looked up and noticed him walking towards her. She fixed him with an exasperated look as if it was his fault she was out ‘boiling’ in the sun. It would have been effective if his mind wasn’t focused on

her pink flushed cheeks, the little hairs spiralling out of her bun, and the fact that she was half-dressed by Granger standards.

‘I didn’t think you liked this place,’ he said as he sauntered towards her, focusing on the gold calligraphy of the bakery’s name above her.

‘I don’t,’ she clipped as she turned away to go inside, ‘it’s just somewhere we both know.’

He laughed a little at her back walking away from him. He quickly caught up to her, on account of his much longer legs, and stretched his arm up over her head, setting his palm flat against the wood of the door. It was almost comical how much smaller than him she was, even with her added height in her hair he towered above her. She was so close she could blame it on a small hitch of balance on the step into the shop and her back would be pressed against his chest. The sweet smell of her drifted up towards him when she turned to him. She looked at him as if she knew exactly what he was thinking, and judging by the flush in her cheeks she was probably right. He let a very serious look descend over his face as his eyes locked into her doe-eyed gaze.

Something rumbled in the back of his mind, like a titan fighting against its chains deep under the ground. The urge to drop his head and trace his nose up the column of her neck fogged into his brain. He tried to swallow it down, but her scent only grew stronger as if he had already given in to the urge. He felt himself begin to fall backwards in his mind, a faint of consciousness quickly overwhelming him under the weight of the strawberries and roses.

With the last of his willpower, he pushed the floor open with one beat from his palm, and it broke whatever trance they’d settled into. She sprung into action as if he had stung her, shimmying away from him into the bakery. But it was too late, he’d already seen the look in her eyes, the slight parting of her lips. He smiled to himself as he followed her through the door and into the bakery. They’d both felt that same magnetism in that moment. She couldn’t deny that.

She picked the farthest table in the back of the cafe and slid herself into the booth seat. He folded his suit jacket over the green velvet chair in front of her table before he pulled it out and sat opposite her. He leaned back into the seat and assessed her while she arranged her handbag into the seat beside her. He narrowed his eyes, there was something off about her.

Perhaps it was simply the environment, she always looked out of place here, the gaudy tropical wallpaper and bright neon signs were the farthest things from Granger’s usual librarian aesthetic.

Flustered. That was the word he’d use to describe her. Her cheeks were permanently stained pink like she’d rubbed them with boiling rose water, and there was a kind of static around her; an aura that made him feel odd at ease the longer he spent watching her rifling through her bag. She eventually stopped and he had to wonder if she lived in it given how much stuff she seemed to have. She cast a quick muffling spell around them before she slipped something small and rectangular from her hand into her lap, ‘So, the thing we need to talk about...’

‘Hello Draco, how are you today?’ he interrupted, adopting a sarcastic joy to his voice. Judging by the drop in her eyelids his teasing must be working. He looked away as he mocked her voice, ‘It’s great to hear you’re well, you’re not still having trouble with that potion are you?’ he tilted his head and lowered the enthusiasm in his voice as though he was responding to himself, ‘Why yes actually...’

‘When you’re done talking to yourself, Malfoy, can we actually talk about what we came here for?’ she snapped at him. He looked back over at her to see her hands planted in her hair as if he had already completely worn out her patience. He was surprised she was so easily riled today, he had intended to at least make her begrudgingly find him amusing.

‘Straight to business, all right, have it your way, Granger,’ he couldn’t stop his own irritability rising in his voice as he folded his arms across his chest and straightened himself up in his chair. He could barely admit it, but he was already beginning to feel the disappointment settling in. He had expected her to at least be nice to him by now, especially after last night.

He rose his eyebrows expectantly at her, and eventually, she took the hint and pulled out a small worn leather book from her lap, ‘I recently came into possession of this book, it’s by a man...’ she stopped and leaned a little closer towards him, firing off a look in each direction cautiously, ‘an *alpha* ...who is having the same dreams we are and...’

Draco leaned forward and took the book from her, ignoring the little spike in the back of his mind when her fingers brushed against his. Strictly business. He flicked idly through the pages while she spoke.

‘...They don’t go away...ever. Apparently we are going to...’ she stopped suddenly. Her head pointed directly at the book in his hands and she swallowed.

‘Live with this the rest of our lives?’ he finished for her, closing the book shut abruptly and running his hand reverently across the front leather. He focused on the feeling of the little cracks of leather against his fingertips rather than the scowl that had no doubt taken over her pretty features.

‘You knew?’ she sounded surprised, like it was impossible that he could possess as much knowledge as she did. He could have rolled his eyes. He wasn’t sure why her clipped manner bothered him so much. He was caught between the shattering of his own high expectations and exhaustion from dealing with her erratic behaviour. She’d chased *him* at the end of last night, and now here she was pushing him away...again. Whatever foul mood had descended over her was not agreeing with him. At all.

‘Of course, I did,’ he set the book down gently on the table in front of her, ‘I have the match.’ His ancestor’s diary had been passed down through the Black generations for a long time. When it became clear that he was going to present as an alpha, his mother gave it to him. Alphas ran in the Malfoy line, but they hadn’t dared keep records of such personal matters, it was a responsibility that rested on the shoulders of Malfoy fathers. One of the responsibilities that his father never had the chance to stand up to, so the book was the best he had. He knew more about omegas than he did himself, and here she was sitting in front of him, knowing

more about alphas probably than omegas. If he was in a better mood he'd make a joke about the irony, but he was not in a better mood.

'What happened to her?' her voice broke through his daze.

He looked up to find her eyes twisted in sadness, she tried to hide it behind a facade but he knew about those more than most. He could spot the sad curiosity a mile off, 'My father would tell you she did her duty to her family, produced heirs with a good family and lived out the rest of her days as a dutiful and loyal wife.'

Her eyes fell to her hands, now playing with each other in the middle of the table, 'What would you say?' she barely got her voice passed the lump seemingly settled in her throat.

He couldn't look at her, not when he was talking about this. It was a sensitive subject with him, he'd spent years fighting against his mother's attempted matchmaking, and damaged their relationship to near beyond repair, 'I'd say she chose family honour over her own happiness. A mistake I do not intend on repeating. I will be picking my own bride.'

She scoffed at him, and his eyes bolted back to her, spitting fire through his gaze.

'Will you?' she said, sarcastically.

'Yes,' he answered, a roughness to his voice warning her to tread carefully.

They sat in silence for a moment, locked into a now cold war fought by sight alone as they contemplated their three-word battle. Eventually, she sighed and reached into her bag, pulling out a small stack of papers, 'I've devised a contract.'

He frowned at her, 'a contract?'

'The Program's contract only really covers what happens while you are there, it doesn't say anything about what to do in between. I thought we could use something comprehensive,' she reached the contract towards him and something prickled in his spine at the sight of it. Was she really going to reduce them both to a few clauses in a contract?

'Summarise it,' he said, bluntly, already feeling the squeeze of dread in his chest.

'If,' she stopped for a moment, 'you decide to sign it,' she lowered her voice and leaned closer into him, 'it basically means that we will spend heats together until we figure this thing out.'

'And what about the in-between?' The part she seemed so keen on specifying wasn't on the Program's contract suddenly wasn't worth specifying.

Her eyes darted away from him, towards some point in the bakery he knew she wasn't interested in, 'That's covered in section 5A.'

He lifted the contract and flicked through the sections while she slicked her hand across her head, pushing back a few stray hairs that spiralled out. His eyes flickered from left to right over the printed letters, each word rising another hair on the back of his neck. His magic

sparked at his fingers as his lips tightened. He slammed the contract shut and held it in front of her, rolled up in his tight hand, 'You don't want to be seen with me?'

Her eyes widened, and her pink cheeks seemed to flash bright red as she stumbled over her words, 'No, no Malfoy, that's not...it's just like the Program, in between we pretend we don't know each other, just until we figure it out.'

'The Program's different, you don't know each other to avoid one another. This is actively saying that you don't want to be seen with me,' he shook his head and threw the contract back on the table, 'What is there to figure out? If I asked you out for dinner right now, what would you say?'

'Malfoy...this had all been really unexpected and I...'

'I've been patient with you, I've given you time to think about whether you want this or not and you're blowing me hot and cold. It's one thing to be with me at night when no one else knows but the minute the lights turn on you turn ice cold with me,' he lifted his hand and slammed his finger down onto the contract, 'And then you have the *nerve* to come back with this. Dreamless sleep potions to cut off the bond in the meantime? Is that how little this all means to you?'

'Malfoy, that's not what I...' her face was as red as the roses he smelled in her pheromones, but right now it disgusted him.

'If you think I have as little self-respect for myself to sign that thing then you clearly don't know who I am,' he stood up from his chair, pushing it out a little too quickly behind him. For once his alpha had the sense to be silent, it retreated into the back of his head like a wounded animal, cowering in the wake of Draco's anger.

'It's just temporary...'

He lifted his suit jacket off the chair and draped it over his arm, 'I'm not going to be some dirty little secret staining your perfect reputation, Granger,' he pushed his chair back in a little too violently. The wooden legs bumped against the table's and all separate life in the bakery seemed to stop, the focus on him as he stormed out. He didn't care, he was simply too furious with her. After everything he had tried, she wouldn't even agree to a single date with him. She simply thought him too below her to want anything more from him than what his alpha could provide her. She didn't even want to try to get to know him now.

He'd entered the program worried he would be taking advantage of some poor omega, it seemed more than anything that the omega had taken advantage of him. How fucked up was that. He tried to pretend that his cheeks weren't stinging with humiliation and anger, tried to ignore the pain building in the back of his throat. If she wanted to be cold, he could do cold at least it was a fucking decision.

To an onlooker, he must have looked like an angry storm cloud storming down the street. The sparks at the tips of his fingers told him they were probably right.

Chapter End Notes

I'm sorry!!! 😭 I will be following up this chapter quite quickly because I would be too cruel to leave this on this kind of cliffhanger!

So here's the question: Is Draco over-reacting or would Hermione's contract insult you? I would love to hear your thoughts in the comments!

We are nearly at the end of this fic and I wanted to thank you for reading even through my erratic absences! I really do appreciate everyone who is reading, commenting along and leaving Kudos! ♥ I'm hoping to circle back and answer my comments when I have written the next chapter!

Chapter 13: Strawberry Mojito

Chapter Notes

This is the longest chapter I've ever written! (it's 11,000 words) I'm sorry, but I'm also not sorry. haha

There was no real good point to cut off so I decided it all goes in together!

This is also the last chapter of this story excluding the epilogue!

Enjoy!

Lots of Love,

Comfort.

xxx

See the end of the chapter for [more notes](#)

‘You mean to tell me you turned down a *no strings attached* sex contract with *Hermione bloody Granger*?’

Draco had his back to his friend, but he rolled his eyes at him anyway as he ran his fingers along a stem of lavender.

‘Are you fucking *mad* , mate?’

‘It wasn’t like that, Zabini,’ Draco grumbled as the purple rain flittered down onto the potions table below him, ‘she’s completely ignoring the bond and hiding me away like some kind of... *sex toy* locked away in a drawer,’ the disgust leaking out of his voice was putrid, but his best friend didn’t seem to notice.

Blaise scoffed, and Draco could somehow *feel* him shaking his foot on his knee, ‘I’m telling you, for a shot at that I’d let her *lock me in* to The Program between her heats.’

‘Blaise!’ Draco finally snapped, throwing the lavender stems down onto the potion table and turning to his friend. The fire bubbling in his veins finally came to the surface. He’d been erratic for days, switching from quiet melancholy to fiery rage in minutes. He knew what it meant, it was his alpha demanding it be heard, demanding that he acknowledge the anger and hurt it felt, all the while making his life miserable.

‘You see!’ Blaise exclaimed as he leapt up from the seat, ‘this is exactly what I’ve been talking about,’ Blaise pointed in his direction as he walked closer to him, ‘You are all over the bloody place mate!’

Draco suddenly felt like a snitch had been released inside his body, it pinged off every nerve. He ripped off his potions apron and slammed it down on the potions table behind him,

scattering a purple storm across the floor, 'You think I don't fucking know!' His voice failed him, croaking and hoarse as the reality of it sunk into him. He fell back a step, using the table as support when he banged his thighs against it. He had walked away from her, but he would never be free from her.

His friend immediately recognised the vulnerability in his anger and made towards him. Blaise's heavy hand landed on his shoulder and pulled him into a tight embrace, 'I know, I know. I just needed you to let it out.'

'You're a fucking arsehole, Blaise,' he mumbled into the other man's shoulder, but he wrapped his arms around his friend and let the man comfort him anyway. It was the closest he would come to thanking him. The bubbles in his nerves simmered down to a quiet rumble, and then to nothing.

They stood in silence for a moment before he slid his hands from Blaise's shoulder blades down his back and pulled his body away. Blaise took the hint and stood back. He didn't waste any time, immediately walking to the chair he sat on to lift his cloak off the side, 'C'mon. We are going for a drink.'

'Blaise, do we have to? If I can just get the amount of lavender right in the potion I might...'
Draco found it hard to concentrate when Blaise was lifting his cloak off the rack in the corner of the room, '...get it to work.'

His friend stood in front of the fireplace with a generous handful of floo powder in his hand, both of their cloaks draped over his arm. With one raised eyebrow of dark hair, Draco was defeated. Blaise held out his arm and Draco took his coat, fixing his friend with his best 'just one' look. Blaise scoffed as he threw the powder into the fireplace. It wouldn't just be one.

'I'm juss sayin mate. Do you not think you're being a lil harsh?'

Draco dramatically swallowed as if the firewhiskey he had been swirling around his teeth could choke him, 'Me?!'

Blaise raised his eyebrows as if it was the only thing keeping his eyelids open, 'yeah you!' He lifted his hand and pinched his fingers together, leaving a gap of about an inch in between, 'not even a lil bit?'

'Blaise...' Draco slurred as he looked down at the bar and shook his head, almost losing his balance on the bar stool. He gripped onto the edge of the bar, pale fingers hanging onto dark wood.

'She's not like us,' Blaise licked his lips clumsily, 'Muggle. Y'know this is all different for her.'

It was then that Draco noticed a beautiful dark-haired woman slinking her way towards them. If you were to ask him who she was, he would have drunkenly answered Cleopatra. Her

straight long hair fell in sheets around her shoulders, while a dress almost as golden as her skin hung off her shoulders, dipping low and leaving an expanse of shimmery skin exposed between her breasts. Blaise seemed to have noticed her too, his attention drifting away from Draco as she swayed her hips towards them.

In Draco's mind, he saw her features like a checklist, and so far her long straight black hair didn't match brown riotous curls, her black-rimmed eyes didn't match soft dark brown, her golden skin devoid of a light dusting of freckles. He pursed his lips drunkenly and lifted his drink, no longer interested in the woman eyeing them up. In the corner of his eye he saw her approach Blaise, who smiled at her and pulled her in by her waist, 'Not tonight, darling,' he 'whispered' into her ear while her almond eyes outright smirked at Draco.

A spicy cinnamon scent wafted towards him and it suddenly occurred to him that she was an omega, and yet his alpha laid dormant. She pulled a card with what he presumed was her information for the owls and slid her hand into the inside of Blaise's jacket, leaving the little card in his inner pocket while brushing her hand against his chest. Blaise looked like he was going to growl at her when she slithered out of his grip, dragging her hand across the centre of his chest. She gave one last secretive smile before she sashayed away through the crowds.

Blaise smirked at her backside as she walked away, hypnotised by the sway of her hips until every flicker of gold disappeared from his sight. He turned to Draco and raised his eyes for a moment asking an unspeakable question.

'No Blaise,' he shut the man down flat.

'Jus cause you're bonded doesn't mean you're married y'know,' the facade of soberness dropped at the loss of the opportunity.

Blaise only received a scolding look. They both knew he was just messing around. Bonds were so rare most people thought they didn't exist, to those that did, bonded pairs were respected almost as much as a mated pair. Almost.

'But I was sayin, Muggles don't get any of this shit, mate. Most of em don't even have arranged marriages.'

'I know, it's just...'

'It's just a scary idea to a Muggle.'

He knew what Blaise was drunkenly trying to convey. That to someone who hadn't thought they would have been paired off almost immediately after leaving Hogwarts, being hitched to someone so soon would be scary. Especially after rudely finding out that her life wasn't as simple as just being a witch, she was an omega to boot. He thought back to her scoffing face when he said he would still choose his wife. He meant that if he had to choose an arranged marriage he would have picked her anyway, and her scoff insulted him, as if she wouldn't have chosen him. But maybe it was more of a sign of how uncomfortable she was with the idea.

He dropped his drink to the bar, and the clunk of the glass against the wood pulled him out of his wishful thinking. If any of that that was true then she would want to go out with him without the sex, not the other way around. She just wanted a partner to get her through her heats, and he couldn't do that anymore. It was one thing to sign up to an anonymous tryst, it was another to stop him generating feelings for her while the bond pushed them together.

Blaise suddenly tapped his arm several times in succession urgently, a little too hard in his drunken state. Draco looked up to see the man's eyes open wide, his smile wide as if he had just come up with the biggest and brightest idea he had ever concocted, 'We should get chips!'

For the first time in days, Draco's face curled up into a smile and a laugh crept up his throat. He slapped his hand across his friend's back, 'alright. You're paying.'

She'd never felt like a bigger fool than when she sat alone after his departure, going through everything in her head while the rest of the cafe stared at her through side-eyes. She wished that she hadn't said anything, just let The Program take care of it all and inform him when her heat was coming, she knew he would have been there, before she had fucked it all up and pretty much wrote him a contract for prostitution.

It had been two days since she'd met him in the bakery, and she'd not heard a single thing from him since. She'd sent him letter after letter trying to explain that she hadn't meant what he thought, she simply didn't have enough time to come up with something better. It didn't help that she had settled into a foul mood she just couldn't shake, her incoming heat swinging moods around violently at her. She hadn't even had the chance to explain to Draco that her heat was coming, and that was the urgency.

Now that she thought about it she wasn't even sure what the point of it all was, it was more a comforting thing for her, some clause that life could go back the way it was before somehow. But everything had changed, and it took his absence for her to really understand that. Her omega staged a permanent tantrum in the back of her mind, huffing and grumbling like an entitled toddler. Her dreams had even been cold and empty without him there. She'd spent last night trundling through a snowstorm of frozen mint ice, cold and alone, hoping that he would show up eventually. He didn't. He must have been taking the dreamless sleep potions.

Her body had woken itself up violently, shaking from the strength of her shivers. Sweat from a previous flush covered her skin and froze into a layer of ice-cold condensation. She'd gone to sleep with her window open, climbing into bed after a cold shower in the hopes that she could fight off the constant interruptions to her sleep caused by her hot flushes, but instead she had suffered the opposite. The open window and the covers she'd kicked off her body only served to pull her dream into reality, or perhaps the other way around. She couldn't tell how these things worked anymore.

It was the last straw, she got up and wrote a last-ditch attempt at a letter for him. She told him she was coming into The Program today, that she knew she only had a few days when she'd met him, and hormonal and scared she'd written out the stupid contract in some kind of bid to

make herself feel safe, and she'd never intended it as an insult. She plucked up all the courage she had left and with her final paragraph wrote, 'A new contract.'

A New Contract.

Tomorrow I will be going into the custody of The Program and I will not be taking the memory erasure potion. I don't expect you to come, but I'd love you to. If you do, I'll also treat it as your acceptance to be my date at the Ministry's End of Spring Ball.

I hope to see you there,

Hermione.

She'd sent it off before she had the chance to overthink it, but now she wondered if it was even enough. The End of Spring Ball was one of the biggest Ministry events of the year, often taking up most of The Prophet's edition after it. Who got too drunk, who was snubbed, who got particularly 'close' and most importantly who came with who. She hoped it would be enough to convince him he was wrong about her, that she wasn't ashamed of being seen with him.

But now, walking down the dark corridor of The Program's accommodation gripping her bag in her hand so tight she thought she might pierce the leather with her nails, she wondered if it was enough. Should she have mentioned other dates, or was it even insulting to ask him to the ball? As if she wouldn't have picked him by choice but only because he had protested? The last thing she wanted him to think was that she had invited him out of pity.

The truth was now that she hadn't been around him she felt constantly on edge. For a while, she genuinely wondered if it wasn't just alphas who could lose their minds. She found it increasingly difficult to hold onto a thought, her meetings with Shacklebolt frequently derailed by her own mind chasing after a slippery ribbon of thought that fluttered out of her hands at a moment's notice. He was more sympathetic now he knew that she was an omega. It was awkward at first, the usually confident man was reduced to bumbling and barely imperceptible blushes on his dark skin, but it became easier. She could hardly put forward her new proposal without admitting she was an omega herself. How could she argue that squeamishness was making it difficult for people without actually explaining how it had affected her itself.

Just like in her meetings, her thoughts drifted away from her and she didn't bother trying to hold onto it. Instead, she looked up to the wall to track her progress, Room 3. She lifted her hand and stared at the little cardboard label tied to her old-looking key with string, Room 5. She didn't need to check it, but she needed to distract herself from the butterflies warring in her stomach and leaching up into her oesophagus stealing her breath. At least this time she wasn't relying on her emergency supplies and could better prepare for what she'd need. She tried not to think about the array of toys she had shoved deep down into the bottom of the bag. She hoped they would stay there, unneeded.

She wanted to stop altogether when she saw the door labelled Room 5. She'd be trapped in there for the next four-ish days. She'd never thought of a door as a gateway to both heaven and hell at once before, the room capable of housing either. She shook it off and slipped her key into the lock.

The room was different to the one she had used before, she closed the door behind her and noted that this space was definitely bigger. It had a bed, kitchen, dining table and even enough room for a small sitting area. The benefits of not taking the system by surprise she supposed.

Her favourite place in the room by far was the bay window beside the bed. The square planes of glass reminded her of Diagon Alley, and the small perch filled with pillows seemed like a wonderful place to sit and read while she distracted herself from her upcoming heat. She brought her bag into the room and set it on the dresser beside the bed on her way to see the view, most importantly concerned with the likelihood that others could see in and witness her turmoil. The slight orange film of magic swirling over the glass told her it was charmed. The grassy hills weren't real, but they still had the effect of brightening up the room.

She took her cardigan off and placed it over a small wooden chair beside the bed, she didn't feel a flush coming on but over the last two days, her base temperature had risen, making even cool rooms seem warm.

She wandered over into the kitchen and checked the fridge absentmindedly, eager to give herself something to do so she wouldn't think about whether or not he would come. It was stocked with mostly pre-prepared meals. She flitted through the options just to give her hands something to do. Then she rifled through the cupboards and familiarised herself with where everything was. She finally found a jar of teabags but lamented over the lack of kettle as she pulled her wand from her bag in the bedroom.

She realised making tea was a mistake with the first sip. The temperate liquid boiled against her lip, leaving it stinging long after she had huffed and threw the contents of the cup down the sink. She washed out the cup and opted for a cold bottle of water from the fridge. She held it against her forehead and let the condensation run down her face, the iced liquid dripping down onto her chest was a relief.

She walked into the bedroom and unpacked her bag. As she pulled out potion after potion, packet after packet of tablets, she tried not to let her anxiety settle in her chest. She filled the top drawer of her dresser with them, in order of when she should take them and hoped she wouldn't need any of them.

She changed into lighter clothes, swapping her jeans for a pair of soft cotton shorts and opting for a loose camisole top rimmed with lace. She took a swig of her water bottle as she lifted the first book she could find before dropping herself down onto the small chesterfield sofa. She tried to ignore the fact that she had chosen the sofa over the window for an uninterrupted view of the door. It was surprisingly comfortable, and it wasn't long before she found herself immersed in the book that Neville had delivered onto her desk the day before. He really was at the top of his field, discovering new magical qualities of common Muggle plants no one had thought very interesting before, it wasn't until they interacted with certain types of magic that they became powerful. It could completely change the approach to...

A loud knock at the door stole all the breath out of the room. Her last thought vanished like smoke in the wind, whisked away by the gale of the air escaping through two confident raps.

Everything in the room ceased to exist but the door, her vision clouding out on everything except the door handle. She sat frozen, clinging onto Neville's book like a shield in front of her body. Her heart raced so fast she felt the muscle burn in her chest like she was running. Another loud knock pushed her up from her position to set the book on the table by the sofa. She smoothed down her hair and sat back down, curling her leg up towards her as if she could somehow hide behind it. 'Come in,' she barely managed to push out past the lump in her throat.

As the door handle turned she was quickly reminded of the first time she had seen it move. When the man behind the door was a complete mystery to her, where all of this began. She felt even worse now, the adrenaline pumping through her body causing her hands to shake while she tried to pull breath into her lungs from the airless room. The door began to creak open, and she tried to decide if she wanted the instant relief of it simply being a Mediwitch checking up on her, or the anxiety attack that awaited his presence.

She told herself to take a deep breath but she was petrified to the spot when she saw pale hair on the other side of the door. The animal inside of her begged her to stay still and quiet, hopefully the threat wouldn't see her, but the human in her argued she was being ridiculous and pushed her towards saying something, anything.

'Hi,' she managed somewhat awkwardly when his head finally appeared from behind the door. She mentally cursed herself for being so ineloquent, but what should she say to him after...everything.

It was at the sound of her voice he noticed her. His mercury eyes locked with hers, and her mind wiped clean like a chalkboard. He closed the door behind him and left a small leather bag on the dresser by the door. Hermione didn't know whether she should be relieved that he'd brought a bag at all, or disappointed that he'd left it by the door as if he hadn't quite made his mind up if he was staying.

He shoved his hands into his trouser pockets and stood at the bottom of the sofa she sat on. She suddenly felt extremely underdressed, he had forgone his cloak and tie and opened several buttons on his dark grey dress shirt, but he still had a remarkably formal air around him.

'What did you mean when you asked me to the ball?' he asked, completely to the point and ignoring her greeting. She felt a bit like the roles were reversed from the last time she saw him. She half-contemplated repeating what he had said to her in the bakery, 'Hello, Hermione. How are you today? It's great to hear you're well.'

Instead, she swallowed, licked her lips and tried to hold contact with his cold hard stare, 'I meant that you were right,' she failed, her eyes dropped to her fingers on her knee that she fidgeted with nervously, 'I haven't given us a fair shot.'

She chanced a glance up at him, his face was still hard but some of the ice in his eyes melted. He didn't say anything, simply letting her stew in the silence of his stare until she could bear

it no longer, 'but you were also wrong.'

He narrowed his eyes slightly, staring down his nose at her as he readjusted his shoulders. Somehow, he gained height as well as breadth with the slight motion and she watched as he began to freeze over again. She chose to continue before his ice wall re-erected, 'I'm not ashamed to be seen with you, and you're not a stain on my reputation.'

His eyes faltered for a moment while he stared at the ground in thought. She would give anything to live inside that blonde head even just for this next moment because waiting on him to speak was almost painful. She tucked a piece of her hair behind her ear while he stared at the wooden floor.

The seconds ticked by until eventually, he spoke softly, 'What am I then?'

She wrapped her arms around her leg and pulled it even tighter into her chest, 'I don't know yet...'

Draco sucked a short breath into his nose and turned his head towards the kitchen as if he was trying to hide the scowl that overtook his face. Her eyes drifted down to the sharp angle in his jaw, past the apple in his throat, and down the long column leading to his shoulders. A fresh minty taste tingled at the tip of her tongue, and she pressed it hard against her teeth trying to block the memory of what his skin tastes like. Her suppressants must be struggling, she didn't have as much time as she thought to get everything she needed to say out. So she wrestled with her tongue until it finally found a way to form words, '...but I'm hoping we can find out.'

He stood quiet for a moment, but his scowl had evaporated a little, the ice statue melting a little once more. His tongue pressed up against the side of his cheek as he thought, and she needed to stop herself from thinking about it.

'I also,' 'When is.'

They both spoke at the same time. They descended into an awkward 'you go first' battle until eventually, they both went quiet. She looked down to her nails while she waited on him to continue.

The sofa bounced next to her, and she realised that he had sat beside her. The movement caused a ripple of woodland mint to hit her senses, and she had to physically shove her omega back into her head. It had gotten her into this bloody mess with its mood swings, she wasn't going to release it now to reign havoc.

She spoke first in the hopes of giving the omega something else to think about, 'I also had something to ask you,' she paused when he raised a curious eyebrow, momentarily distracted by how it brought an air of dominance to his look. *Shit. Focus Hermione.* 'I was going to ask you last time but we...didn't get there.' She cursed herself for mentioning the last time she saw him, as if holding a flame to the awkwardness in the room would do any good. She decided to plough on ahead past it, like a tree blurring past on the train to Hogwarts, 'There might be a project happening soon in the Ministry I think you'd like to be a part of.'

He pulled away, leaning his body forward and resting his elbows on his knees while he stared at his hands, his face screwed up in a mutated form of disgust, and regret, 'I don't really do the Ministry...' the 'because of how people would react to me' was left silent, but still very present in both their minds.

'I'm in charge of it,' she spat out before he could protest further, 'Minister Shackbolt is putting me in charge of The Program. It's a great help to people but I don't think it goes far enough. I think we need to add education programs into schools, and do research into making the lives of alphas and omegas easier. We need to end the stigma around the designations, and take all of this out of the closet and into the real world-'

'You want to work with me?' he broke into her rambling. She hadn't even realised she had slipped into a near-frenzied political speech about her new project. She looked up at him and realised that at some point during her stream of consciousness she had readjusted herself on the sofa, and his grey eyes were boring into her at a much closer distance as if facing him directly while he looked to the side at her wasn't compromising enough.

She suddenly felt Professor Snape's voice in the back of her head, calling her an insufferable know-it-all in his disdainful slow drawl. She had to remind herself for a moment that she was an adult now, even as she stared at Neville's book on the table beside her instead of facing Draco's intense eyes, 'Of course, you've already been working on your potion, and I figured you could use some help.'

He opened his mouth to speak and she interrupted him again, hoping to hold back his rejection before it could tumble out, 'You need to let people see you've changed, Draco,' she fixed him with what Harry would call a "determined-Hermione-stare", 'You can't keep locking yourself away... and it doesn't matter if we are together or not I assume we could be professional and put the needs of-'

'I won't take a salary,' he finally interrupted her in return.

She stood up for a moment and curled her leg up underneath her while the other dangled just above the floor, 'But you...' she stopped and looked at him to see him smirking back at her through the corners of his eyes. She couldn't help her own mouth curling slightly at the corners, 'You'll do it?'

He rolled his eyes and let his head fall to his chest, 'Merlin's beard woman. Yes.'

She smiled back at him, and something began to grow between them, a strange feeling of intimacy in their shared smiles and stares. She ripped her eyes away from him when she felt her omega rumble in the back of her mind, returning her eyes to the illustration of flowers, plants and vines on the cover of Neville's book.

She felt movement beside her as he flinched backwards as if he had just suddenly remembered something, 'as long as this was all arranged before we met for lunch. I don't want a pity project.' He spat the letter 'p's out as if he was hurling them out of his mouth for insulting him.

She let out a quiet laugh and rose her eyebrows at him, 'It's the Ministry, Malfoy. Not even *I* can just *pull* a project out of thin air just because.'

He smiled at her, not quite a smirk, but not quite an innocent smile either, 'So you're really not just Shackbolt's secretary?'

'No!' she pushed against his arm, just enough to cause him to laugh and flinch backward, pretending she had used much more force than she did, 'I keep trying to tell you you git! He's training me! We've been looking for a project for me to call my own for a while now and I think this is the one I want to go with.'

'And here I thought all you did was take his messages and schedule meetings.'

'You bloody...' she reached out to push him again, but this time he turned and caught her wrist before she could make contact, 'Ferret!' She tried to land the other hand on him but he caught it too, both of them falling back against the armrest of the sofa. They laughed together for a moment while she half-heartedly struggled against his hold.

As if they were both struck by the same realisation, they both stopped struggling and their laughter was replaced by a quickly fading smile. If you asked her what had happened later, she would tell you that they slipped into the same old game they had been playing for years. He would bait her, with some snide remark, and she would rise to it, immediately on the offensive. Except this time there wasn't a war between them, or misplaced distrust and hatred. There was laughter, and smiles and a bond weaving its way around them. She couldn't believe the easy comfort they had settled into, teasing and laughing together like they had been friends for years.

But this didn't feel like friends. Her body hovering above his chest didn't feel like friends, the smile slowly melting from his face didn't feel like friends, the glance upwards back towards each other's eyes as they realised they had both been looking at each others' lips didn't feel like friends, and the electricity in his grip on her wrists didn't feel like friends.

Draco's hands loosened, and she slipped a little bit closer to him, shrinking the gap between their chests. This was her chance to pull away, to take this slower, but the closer she got to him the thought of moving away from him drifted further and further from her mind. The air became thicker when she first felt his breath against her cheek, blowing a strand of hair away from her face.

His hands just ghosted against her tiny triceps now, while her hands found purchase against the sofa. His grey eyes stared up into hers and for once they weren't frozen over, the silver liquid moving freely around his irises, 'If I asked you out for dinner right now, what would you say?' he whispered into her face, his breath reminding her how little it would take to steal the words from his lips.

'I'd say it's the least I want to do with you,' her omega answered for her in a quiet lustful voice, momentarily breaking through her haze of suppressants. His scent seemed to surround her, luring her omega through her mind. She shoved it back, forcing her mind to clear at the same time her nostrils did. She couldn't smell him anymore, her skin was cool. The suppressants were working, she must be farther from her heat than she thought. Everything

she felt right now was real: the butterflies in her stomach were for him, the anticipation that tingled against her lips was for him, the low hum slowly awakening between her legs was for him. Everything was for him, but generated by her, the urge to lean down and kiss him was all her.

He carefully tilted his head, just a few degrees to the right, barely perceptible except that she was so close to him, and so aware of how it removed the obstacle of their noses from the equation. She accepted his invitation and tilted her head with him. There were a few milliseconds before their lips touched where she wondered if he would suddenly push her away, but his eyelids fell down over his grey eyes, and she allowed herself to let her lips fall against his, in one soft chaste kiss. They had kissed before, but never like this. Before she kissed a stranger with grey eyes and platinum white hair, but now she was kissing *him*, and he kissed *back*.

Their lips pulled back slowly, losing their grip on each other line by line, as if even their skin didn't want to let the other one go. She opened her eyes to see him looking back at her intently, his eyes borderline shocked. Perhaps it had really just sunk into him too exactly who it was he had just kissed. This wasn't an omega kissing an alpha. She was Hermione Granger, Gryffindor Golden girl, snogging the Slytherin Prince himself even if it was years after the war. It shouldn't have been possible, and yet she wanted nothing more than to close the gap between them and kiss him again. Her eyes flickered down to his lips for a fraction of a second, but it was enough to reveal everything she had just thought to him.

His eyes darkened as his hand crept up her arm onto the top of her back, he pulled, but he didn't need to use force. She eagerly leaned down and locked her lips between his. One kiss followed the other, each one gaining confidence and pressure. Hermione's arms started to burn with the awkward position, she tried to will the discomfort away, afraid that if she made a move the spell would be broken and they'd go back to their awkward silences and questions.

As if sensing her distress, Draco pushed himself forward forcing her back onto her knees while refusing to break off the kiss. Once they were stable his hands ghosted along her sides and onto her hips while she gripped onto his shoulders. She felt his tongue brush against her lip and she impatiently sent her tongue to massage against his. Her eyebrows pulled together as she tried to process the almost painful throbbing in her clit when his tongue glided against hers. The huge gust of air she felt just above where their mouths were joined told her he must be feeling it too, which only made it worse.

The hands at her hips tightened against her flesh as he rubbed his tongue against hers a little more forcefully. She decided to fuck it all. She pushed back on his shoulders, and he broke off their kiss. He looked at her bewildered for just a moment, until he realised she was climbing onto his lap. He looked utterly debauched, his hair messy, lips red and cheeks a little pink. Silver eyes flashing with lust as he grabbed at her with his hands when she straddled him.

Their tongues found each other almost immediately. She wrapped her arms around his neck and let herself fall into his lap completely. The second her already throbbing slit made contact with the bulge in his trousers he growled, a sort of feral dangerous growl that she suspected

came mostly from his alpha. A shot of electricity settled between her legs at the sound, and she almost wondered if he could feel how wet she was through her thin shorts. His hands worked their way past her hips to her ass, clenching the flesh so hard in his hands she thought it might have hurt under different circumstances. But she loved it. He used his new grip to pull her down even rougher against his hard cock, rubbing her clit up the length of him through the thin fabric.

She ripped her mouth off his and moaned, 'Draco!' she'd started out strong, but it had descended into short tortured breaths by the end when his hands began pumping her along him.

He growled again as he lay hard kisses along her jaw, 'Do you know how much I've wanted my name to fall out of your lips like that?' Even his breath across her skin was electric. He lapped ravenously against her sensitive gland, and she could have sworn she felt his taste buds scrape deliciously against her.

His hands slipped under her camisole and pulled it up over her head. She gladly lifted her arms and let the garment go. She wanted to be as close to him as she could. Her breasts bounced out from under the fabric, only kept still from her grinding when he took both of them in his hands. He hummed, low and tortured, 'No bra for me, Hermione?' while he found both of her nipples with his thumb. He brushed his thumbs over her nipples until she threw her head back and let out an exhale that quickly turned into a whine when his mouth found one of the buds. It was about as much as she could take. Her heartbeat had devoted itself to her clit, but the sensation was just shy of what could make her come.

'Draco, please,' she cried when he just lightly brushed his teeth against her little pink bud.

'Please what?' his voice deep with lust, he switched to the other nipple and sucked it into his mouth. She whined in response, the only reply she was capable of when his tongue was swirling around it. 'You have to say it, Hermione,' he released her nipple with one long suck, sending a small spike of pain to join the pleasure.

'Fuck me!' she spat out in surprise at the nip to her bud.

She felt him smile against her chest while his thumbs took up the job of his tongue, swirling around each of her nipples. His nose carved a path along her neck while she panted, still trying to find enough relief in grinding against his cock through fabric, 'Fuck me, what?' He punctuated his question with a slow and devious lick to her gland. She had a sneaking suspicion that she was no longer talking to Draco.

The thought of him struggling to hold onto control crippled hers. Her omega released itself just long enough to drop to a deep seductive tone, 'Fuck me, alpha.'

The moment she acknowledged him his hands gripped the bottom of her thighs. She felt him pull her upwards, then gravity pulled her down. Her back hit the leather and she smiled when she felt his weight land. He placed his hands at either one of her knees and forced her legs open for him, requiring as much force as a butterfly's wing. His hips connected with hers and she growled back at him, a kick of arousal flowing through her and awakening the omega.

She wrapped her legs around his thighs and pulled him tighter against her. His growl rippled against the gland at her ear. She should be scared, frightened that he might lose control and sink his teeth into her, but she trusted him. The thought of him losing control meant he would fuck her into oblivion, and she soaked through her shorts at the thought.

She felt a loss of the weight of him on top of her chest, she reached out to grab his shirt and pull him back down to her but his eyes stopped her from moving at all. They were almost completely black, only a sliver of silver ringing around his irises. He panted in front of her and the muscles in his shoulders seemed to bulge out from under his shirt at the strain.

His black pupils shrunk, and something in his face seemed to tense even harder, when he spoke it was like each word pained him, 'Hermione my suppressants are slipping...I can't hold it back...'

Realisation slapped across her face like a bucket of ice water, he was going to rut. A shot of pleasure ripped through her abdominal muscles forcing her body to curl up into him as her hips searched for some kind of relief. She pushed the omega back, temporarily ignoring its call to arms. She slipped her hand into the hair at the back of his neck and he leaned into the touch, his eyes rapidly searching hers for any indication she didn't want this. She had nothing to show him.

'I'll let mine go if you let yours,' she whispered as if she could somehow stop the alpha and omega hearing them. This was a decision that they wanted to make without them. The omega rumbled in the back of her mind, unhappy to be left out of the decision, but delighted at the prospect of being let loose with its alpha. *She* was delighted at the fact that they had an opportunity, a chance to back out if they wanted. But she didn't want to, she had as much as admitted that she wanted him, that she trusted him to unleash himself with her. This wasn't an alpha and omega deciding to sleep together, it was her and him.

He nodded, and the tension left his face, the black of his eyes expanding out to almost completely eradicate the silver. His voice leaked into his panting breaths, somehow making them rougher, more wolf than man. He rolled his shoulders and it was as if he grew bigger again somehow. She knew it was impossible, but there was something about the way he held himself. Then he noticed her, lying underneath him. A smile grew slow and menacing over his face

'Hermione,' he grumbled, but somehow she also managed to hear, 'omega,' within her name. She closed her eyes and dropped the barrier in her mind, and it was like a sudden relief of a piercing headache she didn't even know she had. The omega slinked out from the back of her mind and she waited, expecting something radical to change. It didn't. She was still herself, if anything, it was as if the omega had disappeared entirely.

'Look at me,' a deep voice commanded.

Her eyes opened, and it was like a switch had gone off. His lips crashed down onto hers and she met him with every fevered brush of tongue. His kiss was all-encompassing, his mouth claiming her as his as she writhed underneath him, searching for something, anything to relieve the intense feeling between her legs. It felt right, lying here with him felt right, like she belonged there under the grip of his possessive hand cupping her ribcage. The hand

travelled lower until it found her ass, he growled into her mouth as he lifted her ass tighter, pressing her clit to his cock.

She whined into his mouth and he swallowed it. He ripped his lips off of hers in spite of her chasing after him.

‘Show it to me,’ he grunted against her jaw.

Yes yes yes the gland.

She obediently looked to the ceiling, lifting her head up high enough to expose herself to him. He traced his nose up her neck and hummed his approval. She was vulnerable to him, if he wanted he could sink his teeth into her and she couldn’t protest. A warm breath ghosted over her gland and her eyes fluttered shut.

‘You could ask the world of me and I would give it to you.’

He was in power, he was in control, and yet he made her feel like she had the power over him with a single sentence. She smiled up at nothing, and then his mouth sucked onto the gland, his tongue stroking rhythmically over it.

Her suppressants gave out. The peppermint and cedarwood scent hit her all at once. He had been scenting the whole time, but it was just a faint whisper of a scent, but now that her omega had flushed the suppressants out of her system it was a snowstorm of him, nowhere and everywhere at once.

She bucked her hips up into him, begging with her body, but he pulled away. She tried to put her hands on his hips in some hope of forcing them against hers, but he was too fast. He violently pushed himself off her, hands latching onto her wrists. Before she even had a chance to register it had happened her hands were held together above her head, and he was chuckling slightly against her chest.

‘Don’t worry, I’ll take care of you, omega,’ he rumbled against her gland, sending shivers down her chest and into the hard peaks at the tops of her breasts. She felt the pressure release on her hands. Just as she was about to experimentally move them she felt one of his hands ghost across her stomach, ‘keep your hands there for me.’ She didn’t move, it didn’t even occur to her to move. When his voice was so sinfully dominant like that, all she wanted to do was please him.

Yes yes please your alpha

She wasn’t even sure who was talking in her head anymore, like they had melded into one being with dual voice boxes.

The hand tracing circles into her stomach drifted lower, and then she felt a single digit trace up the seam in her shorts, just enough to feel it but not enough for her to feel any relief. She heard him suck a pained breath into his lungs before he said, ‘I can feel how wet you are for me, Hermione.’

She felt a pulse of joy in her mind at how rugged he sounded, she'd pleased him.

'Ready for you,' she whimpered when his finger pressed another long slow stroke. She felt him adjust himself on the sofa and she dared not hope he was getting his cock out ready to fuck her or she would have exploded with disappointment if he didn't.

Instead, she felt his finger curl around the fabric, taking her shorts and the lace fabric covering her dignity and pulling them to the side. She dared to look down and the look that overcame his eyes when she was exposed to him forced her to clench. She felt embarrassed for a moment, having him watch her so clearly desperate for him, but it was quickly whisked away by the sound he made. It was something between a snarl and a whine when he lost the last of his control. She watched something shift in him, and then he was on her.

His mouth assaulted her, sucking her into his mouth while his tongue swiped fast strokes up and down her slit. She couldn't speak, she couldn't moan, she couldn't even breathe when he lapped at her like he needed it. It was intense, even with his tongue mostly moving flat. When he pointed his tongue and flicked it over her she wriggled in his grip, trying to get away from the fierce direct contact with her clit.

He pulled his mouth away and bit into her thigh, the pain mingling with the pleasure in a way she couldn't understand. She yelped but lifted her hips back up towards him, begging him for more.

'I'm going to take care of you,' he mumbled into the soft flesh of her inner thigh.

He sat up and pulled his shirt above his head, ripping a few buttons but he didn't seem to care. She watched his chest, and noticed the huge scar running along it. It was a wonder that she hadn't guessed his identity from that scar either. She was tempted to reach out and run her hands across his chest, but he had told her to keep her hands above her head, so she did.

He threw the shirt across the room and returned his laser focus back to her. His eyes bore into her as he started to pull the top buttons out of his trousers. Something feral responded in her when he dragged the zipper down.

'Draco, please,' her back arched, pushing her breasts up towards him while she hooked her legs behind his thighs, pulling him forward, 'I need you.'

His eye flinched before he shoved his trousers down his legs and left them in a pile at the bottom of the sofa. His cock sprang free from its prison and she had forgotten how perfect it was. She didn't have time to dwell on it, his finger lightly brushed against her accidentally when he grabbed her shorts and knickers in one go and pulled. They slid down her thighs and she lifted her legs to allow him to remove them off her.

The same thought must have occurred to them both at the same time, because the look that overtook his face was positively sinful. His hand wrapped around her ankles, making them look small in comparison. He placed one on each shoulder and she wondered for a moment if she was dreaming.

Oh he isn't here to play .

She suddenly found it hard to breath, opening her mouth to let her aroused panting through. She watched him move closer to her, and she closed her eyes awaiting the feeling of him stretching her open. His cock shot up her slit and rubbed against her clit. Her eyes snapped open and a little surprised squeal escaped her lips.

‘Play with your tits for me, Hermione,’ he stared at her through half-lidded eyes as he clearly fought with himself not to sink into her. She wished he would, so she took her breasts into her hands, and squeezed them hard.

She felt him at her entrance, then she felt him push himself inside of her as her hands clenched almost uncomfortably tight to her breasts. She closed her eyes and he kept sinking deeper and deeper into her. And then he stopped and she almost whined at the interruption.

‘Hermione, I really wanted to do this a certain way but I don’t think I can,’ he rasped.

When she looked up at him he was in pieces. His hair was ruffled beyond repair, his skin was flushed red and he looked tortured.

‘What’s wrong?’

He opened his mouth and she had her answer. His teeth had grown sharp, and his hands shook on her thighs like he was fighting himself not to move. He was trying to fight the rut.

‘I don’t want you to hold back,’ she wriggled her hips, moving him inside of her. He hissed at the contact and dug his fingers into the soft flesh of her thighs.

‘I don’t want to hurt you.’

‘You won’t. I trust you,’ and she meant it. Something had shifted between them and now she could *feel* that he wouldn’t hurt her. She lifted her thighs down from his shoulders and jerked at his back with her heels. He landed on his hands on either side of her head. His eyes were jammed shut. She wrapped one arm around his neck, the other crept onto the sharp jawline she reminded herself to kiss later, and pulled him down to press her lips against his. She poured everything into that kiss: how right it felt to be with him even back at the very beginning, how stupid she was for fighting this the whole time and how much *she* wanted him at that moment, not just her omega. They both groaned when he finally sunk himself into her. He glided in effortlessly like he was designed to fit her.

‘So wet for me,’ he whispered against her ear, before he slammed his hips against hers. This was it, he was going into rut. She smiled up at the ceiling while his cock plunged in and out of her. She had forgotten how good he felt, dreams were nothing compared with the reality of him. His hand moved to her ass, and he pulled her desperately towards him even while he rammed into her.

Alpha alpha alpha

She thought she had said it internally, but she soon realised it was in her breath. He forced the air up out of her lungs and with each one she chanted after him. She would have wondered how he could manage to keep up this pace if she could have formed a sensible thought

together. Hermione melted down into sensations, only capable of registering the pressure building up inside of her. She tried to warn him, she opened her mouth but no words came out, each attempt shoved up her throat by another hard frenzied thrust against her.

It wasn't a sudden crash that overcame her, it was a pause. The pressure built until just before it reached a crescendo...and it stayed there. She stayed in that moment just before an orgasm as if someone had frozen time. Her legs still shook against his thighs, her mouth was laid open in a scream that hadn't yet been allowed to pass her lips, and she was in a state of euphoria. She was like a bowstring, held tight and ready to fire, but the archer held onto the arrow. She was caught between wanting to come and wanting to live in this moment forever, digging her short nails into his back as he fucked her into the sofa. She wanted to ask him how he was doing it, how he was keeping her right at the point of ecstasy but then everything changed.

'You're *mine*, omega,' the alpha growled roughly into her neck, 'I'm not going to stop until you're filled with my knot...they'll scent you and they'll know.'

He must have moved slightly, but if you asked her how or in what way, she couldn't tell you. All she knew was something rubbed hard against her clit, and she was gone. The arrow flew, and she screamed. She registered from someplace that he was still talking to her, but she had already melted into her own orgasm. No longer Hermione Granger, she was just that feeling pulsing deep within her belly, the violent quivering of her leg muscles and toes, the scream in her lungs as she called out his name, the liquid orgasm that erupted from her soaking him and the sofa beneath her.

She didn't register that his cock had begun to swell. It was only when she felt the stretch of his knot pushing inside of her that she realised he was gone too. Her orgasm ignited again, a gentler softer one as he collapsed onto her chest. She wrapped her arms around him, as he kept pushing, kept trying to get deeper inside of her while he groaned her name into her chest.

There was something satisfying in knowing she had brought him from a powerful alpha to a trembling wizard in her arms. She smiled to herself, a feeling of completion and contentment settling over her. Eventually, he stilled and she listened to him panting against her chest, struggling to breathe herself under his weight but she didn't want to move.

He lifted himself up on shaky arms. Their eyes met and they smiled surprisingly shyly considering he was still knotted inside of her. She tucked a stray bit of hair out of his face, 'Why the fuck haven't we been doing that constantly?'

He laughed, and the air from his mouth felt cool against the sweat that had gathered on her skin, 'because you're Hermione Granger. Most stubborn witch in Britain.'

She grabbed his face in her hands and kissed him. He tried to pull back until her lips pressed against his, then he gave up and kissed her back. She broke off the kiss just as quickly as she had started it. He gave her a look that said, 'what was that for.'

'Well, obviously I can't slap you when you're right. This was the next best thing.'

A loud clattering noise ripped her out of her subconscious. Her body jumped on the sofa but then she froze still. She pulled the blanket at her waist around her body while her brain tried to fill in the blanks around her. It was dark, she must have been asleep for hours.

Another clang reminded her that she was not alone.

‘Bloody...shit.’

She smiled when she heard his voice, he was still here. She stretched out her arm and pulled it out from under the blanket she found wrapped around herself. He must have put it there.

‘Never worry sir, Mipsy’ll fix it, sir,’ a tiny little voice whispered or a house elf’s best impression of a whisper anyway. Her feet slapped across the floor, and then another softer clang. It must be plates.

Hermione waited until she heard metal clattering off metal, and she hoped it was enough to disguise her body squeaking against the leather sofa. She adjusted herself onto her elbow and peeked over the top.

She saw Draco in the kitchen, his back was to her but she could see he had put on his pyjamas, a plain black t-shirt and grey checked trousers. She was half-surprised that he didn’t wear Slytherin green silk pyjamas with Malfoy embroidered on the back. He hissed and suddenly one of the containers for the ready meals in the fridge dangled from his thumb and pointer finger as he dropped it on the counter. She had to hold in her laughter at Draco trying to do anything domestic.

‘I don’t see why you don’t let Mipsy cook for the mistress...’ Mipsy’s voice contained more than its fair share of sulking. She clicked her fingers and the plates floated up in their pieces to the table, where they joined back together again as if it had never happened.

‘Mipsy I’ve told you about this- she’s not your mistress yet, and I don’t want to get into a whole debate about house elves.’ Hermione’s heart jumped at the ‘yet.’

‘But Mipsy is free, master. You give Mipsy those little,’ she held her tiny hand up making a circle with her fingers before looking through it, ‘circle thingies. What Mipsy is supposed to *do* with those circle thingies Mipsy does not know!’

‘Mipsy!’ he exclaimed in a whisper, ‘be quiet. You’ll wake her up!’

‘Opp! Mipsy is very sorry, sir. Mipsy...’

‘I’ll see you back at the manor, Mipsy. I should wake Hermione now anyway. Thanks for your help.’ Only Draco Malfoy would need a house elf to help him make the magical equivalent of a microwave meal.

Mipsy pulled her arms into her body and gave them a little shake of excitement, her long pointed ears wobbling out through her hair. In a blink, she was gone with a huge crack, and Hermione used it as an excuse to ‘wake up’.

She fake yawned and sat up from the sofa. She raised her eyebrows in her best imitation of surprise, 'what's this?!'

He turned from the kitchen counter and his body deflated as he threw the tea towel over his shoulder, 'How long were you watching?'

'Pretty much from you dropped the plates,' she cringed a little, having been caught so quickly. Seems she could add 'acting' to the list of things she couldn't do. She stood up and wrapped the blanket around her like a dress, tucking some of the material into the wrap to keep it up.

By the time she turned around she saw he had set the table with a black tablecloth, and two plates of steaming cottage pie sat on either side of the small table.

'I thought,' he tapped his wand to a candle in the middle of the table, 'since you agreed to a dinner date with me,' a small flame flickered into existence, 'we could just go ahead and do it now.' He turned back to the kitchen counter and produced a bottle of what was undoubtedly expensive red wine, along with two large glasses, 'Here.'

She smiled at him while she walked somewhat awkwardly to the table given the blanket pooling at her feet, 'what no restaurant you need special connections to get in? Or one you need to *own* to get a table?'

Draco laughed, as he pulled her chair out for her, 'None of those things impress you anyway, Granger.'

'True,' she said as she let him push her chair in behind her, 'but I never expected to be on a date wrapped in a blanket for a dress.'

He chuckled behind her, and whispered in her ear, 'Since when did we do anything the proper way?'

She blurted out a laugh and he took his seat opposite her, looking very satisfied with himself that he had made her laugh.

'You've got me there,' she brought her fork filled with pie to her mouth, blowing on it lightly to disperse the steam.

Draco poured the wine into the glass, and she didn't have the heart to tell him that it was pointless drinking such an expensive bottle of wine with a ready meal. She tried not to laugh out loud when she thought that he'd likely never tried one in his life, and so it never occurred to him.

She stifled her smile with a forkful of pie, and instantly regretted it. The food was boiling against her tongue. She hummed a noise of panic before she lifted the tablecloth and spat out her mouth's contents into it.

'Oh Merlin's beard, tell me I didn't do it wrong! I'm many things, Hermione but a great cook will never be one of them. So, if you're expecting me to...'

She held out her hand while she tried to form words on her imaginary burnt tongue, 'No! No Draco, it's fine,' she took a swig of the wine to wash it down, the cool liquid banishing the heat in her mouth, 'I couldn't even drink a cup of tea earlier. It's just the heat! It's fine!'

She jumped up off her seat and fished through her bag for her wand. She cast a quick cooling charm on the food and let it cool for a moment while Draco stared at his fork as if he wasn't the one bringing it closer to his mouth.

'It's fine, honestly! It's just me!'

'First date and I'm already getting the "it's not you, it's me" speech. Merlin's pants, I'm bugged.'

She practically snorted on her potatoes while he shoved his fork into his mouth, smirking to himself while he chewed. His face screwed up not long after the food touched his tongue, 'That's one thing I'm definitely changing when I'm in charge of this place.'

'Only you could find fault with the food, Draco. It's just designed to be easy!'

'Easy?!' he dropped his fork, and pointed to the kitchen counter accusingly, 'I nearly blew the thing up trying to heat it!'

She couldn't control the laughter that bubbled up in her throat, 'Well, that's... *you*. You've probably never even boiled an egg in your life!'

He raised his eyebrows like it was the most ridiculous suggestion he had ever heard, 'Why would I?!' he lifted his fork up again, obviously not bothered enough about the food to stop eating it, but bothered enough to keep complaining. A lot of things had changed about Draco Malfoy, but not all of them.

He huffed a little while he chewed his food, poking about the pie for a coveted piece of cheese crust, 'and Listen I'll not be the only pureblood in this place!'

She rolled her eyes at him and wondered for a moment what she had gotten herself into, 'God, that's right there are more of you.' Had she signed herself up for a project full of petty grievances and complaints? But she knew he was acting more annoyed than he really was, he still had a little smirk when he stared down at his potatoes. Their teenage bickering, melting into gentle teasing in adulthood.

'Am I going crazy is it warm in here?' her face had quickly heated, like a fierce blush, at first she thought it was just the heat of the food, but the blush was quickly spreading along her chest and into her shoulders.

He swallowed a piece of his dinner casually, '...no. It's a bit chilly actually.'

'Oh...' *Shit.*

He abandoned his fork halfway to his mouth, and set it back onto his plate, 'It's starting isn't it?'

‘Yeah,’ she dropped her own fork as the heat spread down her arms, splattering bits of lamb and potato across the table cloth. She’d really put this tablecloth to work tonight.

‘Shit, what do we do?’

All she could think about was soothing the aching heat burning in her cheeks and spreading quickly around the rest of her body, ‘Shower? The cold water might help.’ Her skin pulsed with waves of sweat.

‘Right!’ he slammed his hands down on the table and pushed himself up off it, ‘never let it be said that Draco Malfoy left his omega wanting.’

His omega.

‘Draco, what are you-’ she squealed when he picked her up and threw her over his shoulder.

He was strong enough to lift her...she liked that. He carried her off across the room like a trophy while she giggled and hit his back, ‘put me down!’

He only grunted out a laugh, her protests were weak considering she giggled the entire way to the bathroom door.

She couldn't describe how quickly they had adjusted to each other. One day had made such an astronomical difference. This morning she wasn't sure if he was ever going to talk to her again, and now she was eating dinner with him. It just felt right. The bond pulled them together quicker than anything she had ever felt before, wrapping around them and forcing them to face what was right in front of them. They had a lot of groundwork to make up for, but for the first time, she was kind of excited to be an omega.

‘Don’t tell me you’re going to break the door down again?’

He slapped her ass, and she let out a little squeal, ‘nothing’s keeping me away from you anymore, Granger. Especially not a bloody door!’

Chapter End Notes

CAN YOU BELIEVE IT!? This story is over 😭

I just really want to thank everyone who has read, commented, and gave kudos on this story and stuck by it even with my tendency to disappear! Your support has really helped me get through it even though I needed such long breaks! This thing was only ever supposed to be a maximum of six chapters and now this big monster has been born!

I hope you enjoyed it and I hope you can find the time to leave your thoughts, views, and opinions in the comments for me to gobble up!

My dearest love also goes to Dirty Mudblood who has helped me get this story out into the world! 🥰

I will be posting the epilogue soon which will tie-up all our loose ends!

Lots of Love,

Comfort

xxx

Chapter 14: Mint in the Rose Garden

Chapter Notes

This is it!! The Epilogue!

I hope you enjoy! ♥

See the end of the chapter for [more notes](#)

Draco held his ear to the door and listened. The hissing noise hadn't stopped yet. Neither had the soft humming. All at once, all noise stopped and two distinct thumps called out to him. He smiled to himself, and hurried back into the bedroom. It wouldn't be long now. He lifted a random magazine off the top of his dresser, kicked his shoes off and jumped onto the bed, cushions leaping off the bed in surprise before landing back down with barely a sound.

He opened the magazine and found himself staring at his own face. It was only the bloody interview they'd done for The Prophet. He flicked the page until he saw a photograph he couldn't bypass, the previous year's ball. All around him were beautiful women wrapped up in soft pastel blues and glittery silks, shimmering and floating in all directions. Little droplets of white glitter fell from the tall ceiling, disappearing into a sea of twinkling lights making up the floor. Serving staff with charmed skin to look like dew drops rested against their features, flaring under the light of the glimmering rain. Everything was fighting for his attention, but he was hyper-focused on her. She looked beautiful that night, her long and flowing grey dress clung to her curves and stood out from the crowd simply because she hadn't bothered with the frivolity. The most effort she had gone to was her hair. She had slicked it back and it fell straight down her back like she was the queen of rain. Not long before the photograph was taken he had jokingly teased her about copying his first year style, and she had pinched his arm playfully. He had already given away how he truly felt about her look the minute he saw her. It was a very Granger thing to do, to steal the show without the months of planning, and Galleons most of the other bints had.

His younger self and hers stared at each other like they have a secret that no one else knew. Older Draco scoffed, he supposed they did have a secret. The past Draco held out his hand to hers, and she slipped her tiny hand into his. Merlin, he always forgot how small her hands are compared to his. In fact, all of her was smaller than him, which he realised when she leaned in closer and her head just barely met his shoulder. He held her tight around her waist, and she leaned her head against his chest. He watched himself smile down at the top of her head when she wasn't looking.

He remembers how he felt at that moment, he was so surprised that she would be so intimate with him in public, he still thinks to this day that she forgot about the dresses flowing around them, the cameras on them. If he was honest, the thought had only occurred to him for a fraction of a second, whisked away in the slow moves of their dance. What he hadn't been

party to in the real-life version of that moment, was how she closed her eyes when her head hit his chest, and how her smile shimmered brighter than any of the glitter the Ministry had charmed.

He smirked down at the paper, satisfied with himself that he had got her. She hadn't made it bloody easy but she was his now, getting ready in *their* bathroom. A loud click caught his attention, and he glanced at the bathroom door out of instinct before he fixed his eyes on the paper, careful not to watch her while she came out.

The words of the article blurred as he focused on her form in the doorway, the effort to hide his smirk was too much. He had to lift the magazine up to cover his rebellious mouth, while his eyes looked her up and down as she slipped her thong over her ass.

'I can feel you watching me, Draco.'

'I'm just reading our article, *darling*.'

It was a strange routine, only played out when they were going to an event. A big event. She would tease him for 'leering over her' while she was getting dressed, but she always chose the bedroom to change into her underwear and not the dressing room. So each time he found a different distraction to hide him watching her, and each time she'd 'catch' him.

'You've no more interest in that article than you do in football,' she said as she walked into the dressing room, flashing him a considerable amount of the side of her breast. He laughed but it was mainly to himself, she was right.

He frowned for a moment as he realised she had walked into the dressing room without a bra, then he shook his head and told himself not to get over-excited. He slapped the magazine down onto the bed and sat up, pulling himself to the edge to slip his feet into his dragon leather oxfords. He was just in the process of finishing the tight bow of his laces when the dressing room door opened. He saw her come out in his peripheral vision, a blurry version of her standing pretending she wasn't waiting for his assessment.

He stood up and smoothed his suit trousers down his legs. The corner of his lip twisted up in a smirk as he lifted his eyes to her, it was immediately wiped off his face, 'Oh you are not wearing that.'

The dress was scandalous. The entire bodice was sheer, the only thing hiding her breasts were the flowers growing into the fabric, literally growing, twisting into vines of embroidery around her arms.

'And why not?!' she asked, her hands drifting to her hips as she half-laughed at his impertinence.

'You could wear the one from last year.'

'Last year's theme was dew drops, this year it's bloom it wouldn't match!' She stormed over to the large mirror occupying the corner of the room, nude tulle billowing out behind her, 'I have to play the part this year, Draco! It was you that insisted we hold the ball here!'

He watched as his own figure appeared in the mirror behind her, his dark green flowers almost invisible on his black suit, 'Then could we just transfigure some flowers onto it,' he slipped his hands around her waist and pulled her back close into his chest, he smiled as he lowered his head and kissed her shoulder through the thin fabric.

Her body relaxed and melted into his embrace, 'Do you really not like it?'

'The problem,' he kissed the juncture between her shoulder and her neck, 'my soon-to-be Mrs Malfoy,' he lowered his voice and let his alpha slip into his tone, 'is that I like it too much.' He pressed his nose hard against her gland and breathed her in. He knew it drove her crazy. She faltered in his arms for a moment, and he took advantage of it to press his lips even harder against the gland, swiping his tongue against it until she hummed. He ripped his mouth off her and whispered in her ear, 'I'm going to rip it off you the first chance I get,' he nipped the skin at her earlobe and let a low rumble of a growl escape his throat, knowing the vibrations would carry through her ears and into her gland.

He felt her hand reach up and cup his jaw, 'Well, you'll have to restrain yourself Mr Malfoy. You can take extra suppressants,' she pushed her ass out, forcing him to take a step backwards away from her delicious fruity floral scent, 'and it's soon-to-be Mrs *Granger* Malfoy actually,' she said as she swayed her hips on her way to her wand

'Oh no, it isn't. You gave up the Granger-Malfoy option when you insisted on a small wedding. You made a deal with the devil.'

Hermione lifted her wand and cast a charm on her hair, causing a few orange and blue butterflies to settle on her curls tied into a messy chignon at the back of her neck. They fluttered their wings slowly on top of her head, 'Your mother's idea of a *small* wedding and mine differ quite greatly.'

'Well, you weren't specific!' he buttoned his suit jacket and slipped his wand into his inner pocket, 'I thought being around Zabini in the past year you'd have learned to be specific.'

'I thought being with me the past year you'd learn how much I hate being late!'

'Well for one, we are the hosts, we can't be late. Everyone else is early. For two, I'm waiting on you, Granger!'

'Dra,' she stopped in the middle of her protest, and slid her wand into a secret pocket in the material of her dress.

He walked over to her as he tightened his cufflinks under the sleeve of his jacket, 'What were you saying, darling, I didn't quite hear you.' He opened the bedroom door and offered his arm out to her to gesture for her to walk through first.

'Arsehole,' she said as she passed him, which earned her a rapid slap to her bottom. She let out a short squeal and then gave him a look that he knew meant he would pay for that later. He grinned at her like it was worth it.

The ball might have been fun if it weren't for the political purpose of it. They had hosted the Ministry's Annual End of Spring ball to gather favour with the Wizengamot. They had numerous new legislation to pass, and none of it was a sure thing. Hermione's risky proposal to introduce sex education with modules on alphas, betas, and omegas had raised more than one scandalised eyebrow, but it was necessary. It was looking like it was going to pass with the opt-out clause, but they needed to be certain. They split up early in the night, schmoozing different members of the Wizengamot, smiling and gracefully accepting their congratulations on the work they had done on The Program, now named The Department of Biological Designations.

In the time since they took charge of the department, St Mungos had been able to close two of their mental health wards, and the Department of Magical Law Enforcement had seen a significant decrease in cases of sexual crimes. It was the kind of thing that *made* the prudes sit up and notice, and they rode the wave right into the chamber of the Wizengamot. Part of it sickened him, how the people who once wouldn't even acknowledge the designations were a problem at all were now falling at their feet, all because of a few ripples in the Ministry and a fancy ball.

It was a *very* fancy ball. The manor's ballroom was immaculately decorated. The pillars charmed to look like a Greek temple, with flowers and vines growing higher and thicker as the night progressed, much like his fiancée's dress. The ceiling was charmed to look like a night sky and little fireflies danced around to leave a twinkling magic sort of light. The room was transformed into an ancient building swallowed up by the spring, even the windows left open cast the most beautiful breeze. The end of spring symbolised in a secret garden right in the middle of Malfoy Manor.

The last thing that anyone suspected Hermione Granger of, was being perfectly capable of playing the perfect Pureblood wife, while at the same time being a professional Ministry powerhouse. Except for him, in the last year of being in love with her, he had learned something very important about Hermione Jean Granger...there was little she wasn't capable of. A lesser man might have been intimidated by it, but it was one of the things he loved most about her. She was an omega, but she held her own like an alpha.

He looked over at the woman in question, who was admirably holding up a conversation with his mother, and he decided to rescue her. He smiled as he approached the women, glad that they had found a way to get along despite their differences. It hadn't been easy to convince his mother she was the right choice to marry. His mother had let go her extreme prejudices with his father out of the picture, but she wasn't quite ready to hand over her son to a muggleborn. Of course, it could only have been Hermione Granger who could change her mind. His mother soon realised that she would be a more advantageous match than any pureblood she could find for him.

When he arrived he smiled at his mother and wrapped his arm around his fiancée's waist while she spoke, 'We're thinking of planting a herb garden next to the kitchens. Mipsy and I have been cooking together and we think it might be easier to have fresh herbs to cook with. We're thinking some parsley, thyme, and perhaps some mint.'

Draco took a sip of his champagne and watched the look of horror descend on his mother's face. She was really rather particular about the gardens, even if she preferred her apartment in London to the manor these days, for obvious reasons.

'Mint?!' His mother's arm reached out to touch Hermione's forearm, 'Oh darling, you simply mustn't plant mint anywhere *near* your rose garden! Once mint gets anywhere near the roses it'll completely infest the whole bed!'

Draco choked on his champagne, nearly spluttering it up over his dress robes. His mother gave him the most disgusted look, her pale nose shoved in the air, 'Draco, I really thought I had taught you better manners than that.'

It was lucky she was distracted with him, because his soon-to-be wife was nearly in tears from keeping her face straight.

'I'm sorry mother, I don't quite know what came over me,' his voice was strained with the effort to keep his grin at bay.

She eyed him suspiciously, but was quickly distracted when a member of the serving staff approached and whispered something in her ear, 'I can handle this for you dears, you enjoy the party!' She flashed them the signature 'Narcissa Malfoy I'm in control of everything' smile and disappeared with the staff.

The second she was beyond ear-shot they both burst into laughter. Hermione curled into his arm and laid her head on his shoulder while she giggled.

'Mint in the rose garden,' she mumbled into his shoulder while he barely contained his laughter himself. He smiled into her hair, trying to avoid the butterflies slowly fluttering in her hair. He beamed with pride, he had the most beautiful woman in the room laughing into his chest and every alpha here could see it.

He lowered the timbre of his voice, 'You know, I believe we've ticked almost everything off the to-do list tonight...' he let his fingers fall to her lower back, dangerously close to inappropriate, '...we've made our political connections...we've talked to our friends...' he stroked his fingers delicately over her spine, enjoying the little shiver that ran through her. He lowered his head to her ear, and whispered, '...how about I plant some mint...' He was teasing her, but he secretly wished he could smell her scent through his suppressants.

'What are you two laughing about?'

When Draco looked up he was faced with Mrs Ginvera Potter and Potter himself as if they had been summoned by his mention. He wondered for a moment how he missed them, Ginny's hair flaming red next to her silky green dress accented with trails of golden ivy. He was a little disappointed they had jumped in before he got to his punchline, but the smile on his fiancée's face more than made up for it. She slipped out of his shoulder but didn't manage to slip past his hold on her waist.

'It's nothing, Harry,' she said, still recovering.

If you had told Draco at Hogwarts that he would soon count Potter amongst his friends his younger self would have told you to go fuck yourself, that he would sooner strangle Saint Pothead, but things were different now. Harry had welcomed him with open arms and a discreet threat to crucio him if he hurt Hermione. With all of that out of the way, he found it wasn't as hard to get along with the Gryffindors as he thought.

Ginny took a quick glance from left to right and took a step closer, 'Are you done kissing Wizengamot butts or can the *real* party start?' she half-whispered holding her hand to her mouth in the least discrete interaction he had ever seen. Draco laughed as he shook his head at Ginny, she might be married to Potter but she was a Weasley through and through.

His fiancée laughed, her face lighting up with joy. Draco raised an eyebrow at her in a question. She held his eyes for a moment before she turned back to their friends, 'Let us make the end of night speeches then we'll be right out.'

His palm was warm against hers as she followed him through the maze. Their laughter carried by the warm gentle breeze filled with magic and possibility. She hitched her skirts higher to keep up with him while he turned to look back at her. He was perfect, pale face lit by the light of the moonlight dancing off his white hair.

It was one of those moments where Hermione Granger was allowed to feel young. Her youth had been taken from both of them by war and misery, but when he suddenly stopped and pulled her against his chest she felt every bit the teenager running off with the guy that was never supposed to be hers.

He pulled her into a kiss when her body landed lazily against his. She tried to pour the warm burning glow she felt in her chest into the kiss, and it wasn't long before her hand found the back of his neck and into his hair. This was her favourite thing about Draco's success with his suppressant potion. Here she was kissing him, not a pheromone from either of them, even if there was they wouldn't smell them. Every bit of fire they had was theirs, not the property of the designations inside of them, even if the line had blurred to almost non-existent after all this time.

He growled against her lips when her fingertips brushed past his gland, lucky for them not every function was dampened. He pressed forward, leaning her backwards as if he couldn't get close enough to her kiss. She fought back, straightening her spine and pressing him up against the bushes while she smiled against his mouth. She ripped her mouth off his and whispered, 'we're going to be late, Mr Malfoy,' she bumped his nose with hers, 'You know how I hate being late!'

She slipped out of his hold and took off, hitching her skirt up to her knees with both hands as she ran away. She thought about how she would look to him, a flowing river of embroidered flowers following her as she whipped around the corner, a few of her curls slipping out of the butterflies' grip and flowing loose behind her messy chignon.

Suddenly the whole thing was like a dream, one of the many where they hunted each other, his presence nipping at the back of her neck. She felt more than saw his hand at her back, tickling the strains of hair that flowed freely behind her. She spied a flash of amber through the leaves and made a split-second decision. She darted to her right through a false hedge and found herself right in the middle of the party.

She stopped dead when she saw the hub of a secret garden party surrounding the huge fountain in the middle of the maze. She smiled up in awe at it, it was exactly how she'd pictured it. She had enchanted the trees to form a gazebo of branches covering the fountain, flowers peeking through the leaves like fairy lights, lighting the scene in a warm amber glow, and reflecting off the water in the pond. Her favourite part of it all, was the people. All surrounding the fountain were her friends, and people she never thought she would call friends.

Pansy Parkinson sat by the fountain, swallowed by a dress made entirely of real flowers. She rippled her hand across the water while she laughed at something Ron said. Ron lifted his tie covered in flowers from his shirt and laughed back up at her before pointing at her own dress and saying something that was undoubtedly funny because Pansy laughed back at him. In the most unexpected turn of events, they had been flirting around each other for months. Harry, Ginny, Draco and her all had a bet on how long it would be until they ended up together. So far Harry and Draco had been beat, and now it was just a contest between her and Ginny.

Speaking of Ginny and Harry, she spied them talking with Luna at the bar. Hermione smiled softly at Luna, in typical Luna-fashion she had interpreted the theme differently to everyone else. Her tiny frame was swallowed up in an almost translucent mass of ruffles, because what other interpretation of bloom could there be than a jellyfish bloom. Hermione had to admit it fit

Luna perfectly, not only to have such an original take on the theme but also to cover the smallish bump protruding from the woman's belly. The inside joke was not lost on Hermione either, Luna had been through her own bloom recently, nursing her second pregnancy nearly immediately after the last one.

'Found you,' she jumped when her fiance whispered in her ear.

She spun and slapped her hand playfully against his chest, 'You scared me, you git!'

He laughed as he pulled her against him, 'Was that not the point?'

He had her there. He had been chasing her, that was the point in her running. She merely fixed him with a look, and he smirked back victoriously. He rested his hands against her lower back and she relented placing her hands around his neck.

His smirk twisted to take on a new nature, and then he leaned into her hair, 'How about after this party I show you just how invasive a mint plant can really be?' he growled into her ear.

She gasped and slapped her hand against his chest again, pushing herself farther back out of his arms, but he kept her tight to him, encouraged by the smile she couldn't seem to wipe off

her face, 'Maybe *I'll* show *you* just how a strawberry plant can spread!' She raised her eyebrow at him and winked playfully.

He huffed out a laugh, raising his own eyebrows at her, 'Oh is that so?'

'Oh yes,' she leaned into his face and whispered, 'it spreads all over the garden.'

Draco lifted his lip in a smirk, 'I didn't know that strawberry plants were quite so...quick to spread.'

'Only in the right garden,' she gave him one last wink before she wiped her face of all playfulness, and widened her eyes into an innocent look, 'You plant one plant and the next year you have three!' she said with child-like enthusiasm, cleansing the innuendo from the air.

She expected Draco to laugh, or smile, or give her that look that said she was cheating, but instead his face slowly began to fall into a tense seriousness. Hermione's heart skipped as she riffled through what she had said for some deeper meaning. Their playful banter evaporated into the air and Hermione's smile fell too. He looked unusually serious, and his voice was low when he spoke, 'Do you want to plant a garden with me, Hermione?' barely above a whisper.

Brown eyes searched grey, fluttering between his eyes waiting on a dance of light creeping into them, but it never came. He was serious. Her eyes ran from his intensity, and was met with the sight of Luna, her alpha curling himself around her body, nursing her lower back protectively. She had never seen Neville that happy as he smiled down at his wife. For a moment she imagined what Draco would look like with the pride of a father in his eyes. Would he look at her like she was carrying the most precious resource in the world?

'The wedding's not for another month,' the words barely left her mouth, quiet and defeatist.

'Oh?' Draco shuffled against her, and she felt a smile creep into his voice, 'I doubt they'll notice a month...'

'We haven't completed the bond yet.'

'Well...that's pretty easy to fix...'

She looked back up at him, and caught a glimmer of hope in his silver eyes. She flitted through her brain looking for an excuse, but she came up empty. They knew they were inevitably spending the rest of their lives together. They had filled their department with people they trusted, a mansion full of empty rooms demanding to be filled, and more than enough galleons to support several families.

'Hermione!' She jumped at the sound of Ginny's voice calling out through the gardens, 'come quick the baby's kicking!'

She kept her eyes on Draco, and watched his smile tilt into victory as if to say 'there's your sign.'

She swallowed and let her heartbeat again, it made up for lost time, filling the silence with frantic thuds against her ribcage, ‘Okay, you’re on, Malfoy.’

She slipped out of his arms while he stood fixed to the spot, trying to restart his brain. She’d said yes, she’d actually said yes to him.

He watched her stroke her hand across her friend’s belly, recoiling and squealing when the infant inevitably kicked her hand and his heart filled with hope for a little brown-eyed boy with platinum white hair whose face he didn’t yet know. He imagined what she would look like, glowing with his baby in her belly. He suppressed his growl into a hum, his vision blurring around everything but her.

‘Oh no,’ a voice startled Draco out of his trance. He looked to his right to see his friend Blaise Zabini sipping a drink of firewhiskey from a cut crystal glass, ‘that is a dangerous look on your face. I don’t like that one bit.’

Draco laughed and shoved his hands into his pocket, ‘you might be in for a few months of overtime, Zabini.’

‘I don’t often concede...’ Blaise lifted his glass and tipped the rest of the liquid into his mouth, pulling his mouth into a wince, ‘but Potter can have Godfather on this one,’ he slapped his hand to Draco’s shoulder and with that his friend was gone, slipping around the happy couples to plant himself behind the bar. He disappeared below it, before he popped back up with a smile, holding two bottles of redcurrant rum in his hands.

Draco looked at the people he never thought he would see in a room together, each wearing ridiculous outfits to match the ridiculous theme. From Luna’s jellyfish to Blaise’s light grey suit embroidered with pink and white flowers. Only Blaise could wear pink flowers and still somehow seem masculine.

But it was how they acted with each other, smiling and talking as if they had all been friends for years, and not enemies for the first few years they knew each other. The relationship that surprised him the most was his and hers. As he stared over at her laughing at something Blaise had said, glowing under the soft light, he thought about how unlikely it was that she was with him. The Program was far from perfect, which they’d discovered the minute they took control of it, but it had brought her to him. That made it more than worth it.

‘Don’t just stand there Draco we’re doing shots!’ Pansy’s arms flailed rapidly at him motioning him forward. He smiled as he walked towards his friends, all fussing over Blaise who was spinning the bottle of rum in his hands and running the open bottle upside-down along the glasses laid out, spilling more of it onto the bar than in the glasses.

Yeah, he had a lot to thank The Program for.

Thank you so much for following along with this story! I hope the epilogue was everything you wished it to be! 😊❤

I hope to see you again on my future works!

Lots of love,

Comfort

xxx

End Notes

My first dive into the world of Alpha/Omega dynamics!

Please please let me know your opinions- positive ones keep me motivated, criticism makes me a better writer so all are welcome!

I look forward to hearing your thoughts!

Lots of Love,

Comfort

xxx

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